Encounter

February 1975 35p

The Ethnic Revolution

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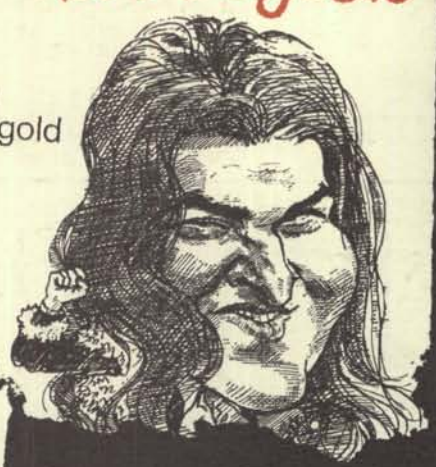
Peoples in a Boiling Pot

George Feaver
Wounded Knee & the New Tribalism

The Case of Dr Rose Dugdale

Tom Mangold



Auden & the Audenesque

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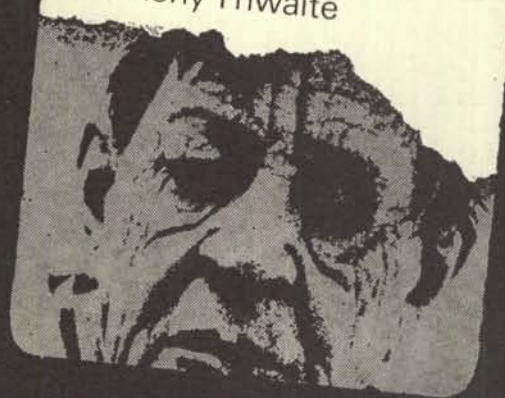

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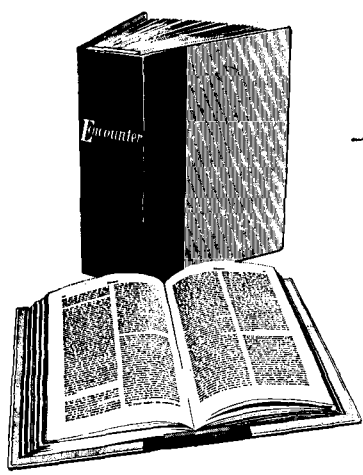

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Gillian Tindall

Xenia. Or the Last Sculpture

THE FIRST TIME I met Xenia she made a quite different impression on me from the one she made that other time. There are people like this, with whom every encounter seems a separate experience, unrelated to past or future. Perhaps it is like that for them too. They present themselves, each time, not fraudulently but selectively, in a heightened and simplified version, according to the particular circumstances, like artists. And in fact, of course, Xenia *was* an artist.

That is the first thing one must say about her, the general identity tag: *Greek artist and sculptress*, as on the catalogues of her numerous exhibitions. A respectful bow. I know little about these things. Had Xenia been a writer or a film-maker I would have been able confidently to evaluate her, able to select and present my own rendering of her instead of being dependent on other people's estimation of her and my random prejudices. But as it was, when George and Nana Tsingos and their friends casually referred to Xenia as a fine sculptress, I could neither agree nor disagree. It merely made me feel inferior and philistine because, the first time I had met her, I had thought her a fat show-off. I suppose I did not realise then that someone can be a fat show-off and an artist too.

It was at George and Nana's house, at one of their impromptu and oddly assorted parties, not long after Chris and I got married. We used to go to George and Nana's quite a lot in those days, when Chris still had his bachelor habits intact and before the children came. Mostly I used to talk to Nana, while Chris made a point of joining the group round whatever visiting celebrity was present. That makes Chris sound a pushing intellectual snob, which is not quite fair. But the fact is he regards any social gathering as something to be tackled and made to yield up whatever juice it may contain, whereas I like to talk to people like Nana in corners.

But even I couldn't ignore Xenia because she dominated the room. I know now that she was having an affair then with someone who is important in the Franco-Greek films-and-music world to which George and Nana mainly belong. Triumph and sexual excitement shone from her like the faint glow some fishes have in the dark, and she also had that stripped, accessible quality of someone in a new and foreign country who feels free to go anywhere and do anything, the creeping diseases of commitment and habit not having yet set in. Apparently she had left Greece because she didn't like the Colonels, or they didn't like her. She had had to leave a lot of her sculptures behind and was starting again here in London in a studio lent (of course) by a wealthy friend. So Xenia was your actual high-principled artist-victim of political repression. . . . I began to feel cross. I dislike being milked for an obligatory response of admiration and sympathy, but what really annoyed me was that she seemed to be making such a very good thing of the situation. Basking in it, in fact.

No, let me be entirely honest (even if I can't aspire to being either a high-principled artist or a political refugee): what *really* annoyed me was the way she was flirting with Chris and the way he was responding to it. I was very young in those days and we hadn't been married long: I had not realised then that some women act seductively not because they are looking for a new man but because, for the moment, they are not: their patent sexuality is simply the overflow from a current absorbing affair. Because (to quote Chris) such a woman is being screwed

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silly by one man, she sees all men at that moment through a warm, sensual haze.

"And anyway," he added, "You know I don't fancy fat women. Xenia's bum's the size of a pillar box!"

"You didn't seem to be noticing her bum when you were talking to her." Xenia's breasts had been on more obvious display, and I was sensitive about breasts because mine were, I thought, too small.

"Well, *any*way. . . . Xenia's not basically my type at all, you should know that. Why, when I've got you, should I go chasing after a woman with a big bum at least ten years older than me who's having a thing with Padopolos and who's anyway only really interested in whacking the guts out of a big lump of stone with a cold chisel? One of Nature's castrators, I'd say, in spite of that Earthmother bosom."

"She can't be ten years older than you," I said; "You're thirty, she can't be much more than thirty-five." But I felt better for what he said and began to giggle about the cold chisel. Even thirty-five sounded immensely old to me then; I think I naïvely believed that all men really liked young girls best.

"Well, she's no kid," he said. "She can't be. She's got a son of—oh, I forget what she said. Twelve or something. He's still in Greece, she told me, with relatives."

"She didn't look very worried about him this evening," I said unkindly, but meanwhile thinking how glad I was that I was not thirty-five and that my child was not far away from me in a hostile and treacherous land but was curled up, an invisible fish, in the waters of my own belly.

IT WASN'T TILL several years later that Chris let drop, quite casually, as if he had thought I had known it all along, that later during that first pregnancy of mine he had slept with Xenia several times while her celebrated lover was out of the country. It hadn't, he said frowning, as if he had difficulty in recalling it, amounted to anything. Xenia had rung him at work on some pretext, had met him for a drink and had made it clear what she wanted. She got restive and anxious, he said casually, if she went without it for more than a few days at a time: she really needed several lovers to keep her going. She was a big, healthy girl, made for peasant labour, with a superabundance of energy which even hacking stone did not use up.

Fortunately, by this time, I understood more about these things. But I could not resist pointing out to Chris, a little coolly, that I had actually been right about Xenia having designs on him, hadn't I?

Six or seven years went by altogether. We heard of Xenia from time to time, but I don't remember that we ever saw her again at George and Nana's. Perhaps she was no longer in London, or perhaps for some reason they did not see her for a while—or perhaps, even, there had been rather more to his episode with her that Chris had admitted to me, and George and Nana knew about it and so tactfully kept her out of my sight. But I don't think that last explanation is likely to be the case, because it was George himself who phoned me one day last winter, and asked:

"Do you remember Xenia? I think you met her once at our place a few years ago."

I said I remembered.

"Well, she wants to meet someone like you. Someone who can write a book about her."

(I should explain that, in the intervening years, I had ceased to be young and pregnant and vulnerable and had, instead, become a supposedly successful journalist.)

"Write a book about her—that all?" I asked, with a heavy-handed irony of which I felt ashamed when George said:

"She has cancer, you see. And she's determined to beat it. She's turned herself into an expert on the subject—read everything she can lay her hands on and gone to talk to specialists and so on. She's having—oh, I don't know what exactly: some new immunological treatment, I think. She'll have to tell you about it herself."

"If I want to hear," I pointed out cautiously. I have learnt to become properly wary of people who seize my elbow and say "You're a writer, so this will interest you—." One is only interested in what one is interested in. I have never been interested in cancer.

On the other hand, making an effort, I realised that Xenia had probably not been interested in cancer before it happened to her.

"How did it start?" I asked.

"In her breast—I think. She noticed a lump or something, but when the doctors

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said she'd better have the whole thing off she wouldn't. I mean—she's a sculptress. She likes her breasts."

I remembered those breasts, years before, so freely and proudly offered in George and Nana's living room.

"Perhaps I'd better go and see her," I said.

"Well it might make an interesting article anyway? New methods of treatment and so on. Doctors need knocking, if you ask me: they can be such conservative old sticks. 'Breast off to be on the safe side,' they say, and half of them never bother to think what this *does* to a woman. That's what Xenia says, anyway. She thinks it's a sort of castration-mania doctors have—a male version of it. Anyway, she'll tell you about it herself."

So I met Xenia for the second time, in her flat near Swiss Cottage. It was one very large room, really, built on to the top of an old house. I think I had expected trailing plants and ikons and floor cushions and bead curtains, taped balalaika music and all the familiar apparatus of expatriate Levantine life, but Xenia's setting was unexpectedly austere. Apart from a divan and a few cupboards, the only things in the room were her own works, bodies in iron and stone and mixtures of other materials, populating her home like a silent crowd, flesh made unfleshly, humanity petrified into art. There were pictures too, mostly in charcoal, and one of these ran the whole length of one wall: she had done it on a roll of lining paper, she said. It showed a man, naked, attenuated and slightly distorted like a picture of Christ on the cross, but lying down on a bed—perhaps on the very divan now opposite him. Eyelids lowered, lips slightly parted, he dominated the room, and his enormously erect penis dominated him. I found myself irrelevantly wondering if Xenia had managed to sketch rapidly before that straining erection slackened, or whether she had had to break off from time to time to encourage it. As I said, I am not very good at art, and I found this picture oppressive. As if it had indeed been an ascetic Christ stretched there, it seemed to be setting, by implication, an impossibly high standard of awareness for the purposes of everyday life. Did Xenia really eat her breakfast under it, alone, on muggy mornings? I could see it was a fine portrait, but it seemed to me to be making some defiant statement about life which, much of the time, is not true. We may live in a house of flesh, but sometimes, when the flesh deserts us, droops or withers, life still goes on. And on.

If, in George and Nana's living room, Xenia had once seemed flamboyant to the point of crudity, here in her own setting she now seemed by contrast unexpectedly gentle and—I hesitate to use such an old-fashioned and discredited word but it really is the only one—womanly. She was still a heavy and comely woman: whatever poison was working in her system its process was not yet apparent to the casual eye. She wore a long skirt. Her breasts, saved or otherwise, were hidden within a buttoned black cardigan. Her smile was sweet and seemed to have a genuine timidity about it. It had not occurred to me, though it should have done, that she would be, this time, shy of me and almost in awe. I was no longer just someone's young wife, but a professional listener from whom she hoped for some esoteric response. I expect I seemed quite different too.

She brought out small Greek cakes and carefully prepared coffee in a copper pipkin. We talked for about two hours. Or rather, she talked, at first disjointedly and then with greater and greater coherence and strength as if she drew nourishment from stating her case rather than being depleted by the effort. And I, in my assumed role of powerful outsider and worker of who-knew-what mysterious transformation—I listened.

Because George had led me to suppose that this would be a story about a woman fighting her doctors, fighting convention and established practice in the name of her own physical individuality, I went on mindlessly seeing it in those terms and asking questions about the exact nature of her treatments. It was only after a while, as she talked and talked (she had been rehearsing this anxiously for days, I afterwards thought), that I began to realise I was—not on the wrong track, exactly, but on a parallel track to hers which followed it but did not lead to quite the same place. She spoke coldly of one or two doctors, but warmly of others, in particular of one who was using her to try out some new and revolutionary theory. He, at any rate, was evidently not an enemy. The enemy, in fact,

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was not convention after all, but death itself. It was her battle with the threat of death that she wanted to have recorded.

So, at any rate, I eventually surmised. After that, our conversation became clearer, less circumstantial. This woman was an immensely tough fighter, a survivor if ever there was one: hadn't that been apparent from the first? As if corroborating my own developing concept of her situation, she began enumerating the things that bound her to life, her claims on it: her work, her increasing success, her son (now a student in Paris), her friends and lovers. She told me, with a directness that now seemed, not brazen, but simple and realistic, how when the diagnosis of cancer had been confirmed, the first thing she had done had been to seek out an old boy-friend with whom she had quarrelled and spend the night with him.

"I understand," I said, and she smiled at me and said:

"I thought you would."

She spoke uncertainly but hopefully of making tape-recordings for me to transcribe, of letting me see letters exchanged between her son and herself, of what being Greek meant to her. And I agreed that, yes, yes, there was undoubtedly a lot of interesting material there. But I was a bit hesitant all the same. I couldn't quite see myself getting a book out of this, or even an article, though it wasn't because the subject was too slight. Too big, rather, and in a way I still had not quite encompassed intellectually, let alone emotionally.

Only when I came to leave did she look suddenly tired. The thick, durable white skin of her face and neck had a puffy look. But then she was, after all, in her forties. I had seen many of her contemporaries look far worse.

"You will be in touch soon, won't you?" she said, almost wistfully.

"Of course I will. As soon as I've thought about it a bit—made some notes and so forth. . . ."

She said placatingly, as if mentioning some irrelevant and humiliating detail:

"You see, there may not be much time."

At that moment I discounted this, hardly hearing the words let alone their sense. You see, I did not really believe, in my heart or wherever it is that we truly understand things, that this strong-bodied, active, erotic being, a woman like myself, was really dying at all. I could see that a serious struggle was taking place. But I thought she would win it, as she had won all the others. I was, after all, and in spite of appearances, still young and ignorant.

A DAY OR TWO later I phoned George. "I don't really know. . . ." I said, after I had recounted to him some of what Xenia had said to me: "There's a lot *there* of course. But I'm not sure *I* can do anything about it. She's too individual to make use of a ghost writer. She ought to write her own book, George."

Glibly one says these things, not counting the hours of concentrated, lonely strain, the pen to be held or the keys to be tapped, the finite quality of energy and power and faith. So might one airily say, viewing a block of granite: why don't you just turn it into two people making love?

There was a pause, then George said, sounding tired, for him:

"Yeah . . . I suppose there *is* a lot there? I wasn't sure. When she mentioned turning her experience into a book, naturally I thought of you. But, when you come down to it—when you get past all the art and sex and success and all the rest of it—what is Xenia? She's a woman of forty-three, ill and on her own. It's not funny. But it's not such a big subject, either."

I thought of Xenia alone in her flat, under the tautly naked man on the wall, surrounded by her created crew of rigid people who would never sag or collapse from within. I mentioned to George then what she had told me about seeking out her old lover, adding "I'd have the same reaction, I'm sure."

"Yeah?" he said, apparently not attaching the same significance to the anecdote that I did. "Well. Xenia's always been like that. And certainly when this breast-thing first started up she went round hauling *everyone* into bed."

"Oh yes, George?"

"Oh yes—and you needn't sound like that. I've always liked Xenia."

"I like her too. I really do." It was true.

"Mmm. . . . Well look, why don't you write to her more or less what you've said to me: that it's a great story but that you think

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she ought to do it herself, and that you'll give her any advice and help you can and so forth. Might even be the best thing for her, that—encourage her to do it herself, I mean. Take her mind off her—ah—body."

Evidently George too, like me, had failed to understand. He was a healthy man, why should he? Oh, I suppose we both knew, theoretically, that Xenia might not be going to live much longer. But we didn't feel it, didn't reckon the implications. We didn't understand that time was already running out and that treating Xenia as we would treat any other equal was inappropriate. The very-dying are different from us, as Scott Fitzgerald might have said. But, had he done so, George and I would both have replied, like Hemingway, in supercilious obtuseness: "Yes, they've got less life ahead of them!" We had failed to realise, he and I, that Xenia had already joined another, separate group of people: those who know so well that they are dying and that there is no help for it that they do not think that they need to spell it out. She was not fighting doctors, after all, or yet fighting death itself. The new treatments were a charade, a form of assertion, no more. She was fighting *us*, to get us to recognise her true position and to celebrate it fittingly. And, for once in her life, she was not being successful.

So I wrote Xenia a long, careful, realistic, irrelevant letter, and heard no more. Two months later I met her again, at George and Nana's. She still looked just the same, carefully dressed and made up; the house of flesh had not yet caved in. She said her treatment was continuing. I asked her if she was writing anything yet, and she said Not yet—she had decided to leave it for a bit: she would talk to me about it before she started: she would let me know.

I was vaguely aware of something forbearing and almost tender in her manner, as if I had failed her but she had already forgiven me for doing so and time had moved on anyway. But I still didn't analyse to myself exactly what was happening.

IN THE SPRING, Chris and I were away for some time. When we returned, it was a couple of months before we saw George and Nana. They invited us round one thundery Sunday evening in summer. There were quite a lot of people there.

"Is Xenia coming?" I asked someone, suddenly remembering her.

"She's dead," said George over his shoulder, pouring whisky. "Didn't I tell you?" He sounded almost resentful. Perhaps it was just embarrassment.

"No, you didn't. When?"

"April—wasn't it, Nana? I thought I had."

"Well, you didn't. I wish I'd known."

"I'm sorry. You were away or something. I thought we *had* told you. She went into hospital with a bad pain or something and that was that."

"Just—like that?"

I was incredulous, almost baffled. I had naïvely supposed death to be important. Evidently I had failed to grasp that all the important bit happens before.

It was rather as if some artist was preparing to execute a remarkable picture in a quite new form, carefully collecting all his materials, walking round and round his easel—and then, suddenly, he had just scrawled something crude on it in charcoal, torn the sheet off, handed it to me and walked away.

Or no, let us change the metaphor, since Xenia was primarily a sculptress: it was rather that she was facing a big, immovable block of hard substance—her certain death, which she had recognised even if no one else had. And, being a sculptor, she wanted to make something of it. Artistic creation was her way of controlling life. She would control it to the last, she thought.

She asked us to help her. Time and strength were both betraying her. She needed our help to manoeuvre this block of stone, to attack it and master it and smooth it into meaning. She wanted to turn it into something—to knock death itself into some sort of shape. But we did not understand. With fatuous compliments on her own power and individuality we left her to it, ill and alone.

Maybe, as George said, when you cut out the flamboyant stuff, it's not such a very big subject after all. Maybe nowhere near enough for a book. Perhaps—just enough for a short story?

I take out my pen and write hopefully on top of the sheet:

Xenia. Or the Last Sculpture.

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Nathan Glazer

The Universalisation of Ethnicity

Peoples in the Boiling Pot

ARE THERE some large discernible trends in the world—political, social, economic—that are leading in general to an accentuation of ethnic conflicts?

Admittedly, there are problems involved even in the exact determination of whether there is or is not an increase in "ethnic conflicts." Thus, we have the persisting conflict between French and English speaking in Canada. Is that an "ethnic" conflict, or a "language" conflict, or the struggle of a "suppressed nation" for independence? We have the division between "Indian" and "Spanish" elements in a number of Latin American countries. Are those "ethnic conflicts"? We have the tragic conflict between Protestant and Catholic in Northern Ireland. But isn't that an essentially "religious" conflict? We have the movements for Scottish and Welsh autonomy in Great Britain; Breton and "South French" movements in France; the strain between Northern and Southern Italy. Some observers would define these as "regional" rather than "ethnic" movements. In each case an outlying section of the country has not shared in the prosperity of the centre, and this seems to have awakened some long dormant ethnic consciousness. One doesn't know whether the group pressing for autonomy or more central government funds feels deprived because of an ethnic difference, or because of regional discrimination. The group has a choice as to which basis of deprivation it will emphasise.

I will not continue this tour around the world, but if I did we would find a host of conflicts in which race, religion, region, and nationality are involved. I have just seen newspaper references to a re-emerging conflict between the Kurds of Iraq and the Iraqis (they share the same religion), and between the Muslims and Christians of the Philippines. In both cases an international element enters into the conflict—because there are also Kurds in Iran and Turkey (and Iran and Iraq have border conflicts), while the Muslims of the Philippines are linked (by religion as well as by former political connection and culture) with North Borneo which is now part of Malaysia. Indonesia is also involved, at least distantly—because under its previous ruler Indonesia dreamed of a "greater Malay empire" which included Malaysia and the Philippines.

LET ME TRY TO CLARIFY these varying bases of group division which seem so diverse and to justify a usage, which may seem to some to be too imperialistic, in which I label them all "ethnic." The term "ethnic" refers—and this is a usage that by now is quite common among sociologists and other social scientists—to a social group which consciously shares some aspects of a common culture and is defined primarily by descent. It is part of a family of terms of similar or related meaning, such as "minority group," "race", and "nation"; and it is not often easy to make sharp distinctions between them.

"Race" of course refers to a group that is defined by common descent and has some typical physical characteristics. Where one decides that a "race" ends and an "ethnic group" begins is not easy. Clearly, Swedes are (on the average) physically somewhat different from Frenchmen

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or Italians; but we normally don't use the word "race" to describe these differences. In European usage, on the other hand, at least until the time of Hitler, "race" was rather unselfconsciously used to describe what we would call "nations"—such as in the term "the genius of the French race." *Race* tends to refer to the biological aspect of group difference, *ethnic* to a combination of the cultural aspect plus a putative biological element because of the assumption of common descent. It is possible for a race not to be an ethnic group. In some descriptions, Brazilians of the predominantly Negro race do not appear as an ethnic group because they are not aware particularly of a common culture different from that of other Brazilians. This is so also because they don't have a corporate self-identity as a distinct group, even though *individuals* are aware of their physical characteristics and are aware that these physical differences tend to be associated with some common group characteristics (*viz.*, poverty). Recent accounts from Brazil seem to suggest that Blacks in Brazil may be becoming an ethnic group. This would fit in with one major theme of my article; that is, that the ethnic group is tending to become, in many countries, a more significant basis for social organisation and for individual identification.

"RACE," THEN, refers to something more grossly physical than ethnic group. "Religion," another significant basis of human organisation, seems on the face of it a very different matter from ethnic group. Religions, in common understanding, are based on conversion and individual allegiance. The great religions—Christianity, Islam, Buddhism—include individuals and groups of every race and ethnic group. In the specific realities of social intercourse, however, religious groups very often act as, and are felt as, ethnic groups. The overwhelming majority of people, after all, are born into a religion, rather than adopt it, just as they are born into an ethnic group. In this respect both are similar. They are both groups by "ascription" rather than "achievement." They are groups in which one's status is immediately given by birth rather than gained by some activities in one's life.

Religions are generally in any given setting specifically associated with a defined ethnic group. Thus, in the Sudan and in Chad, Arabic-speaking groups in the North (which are Muslim) contrast with Negro groups in the South (which are pagan or Christian). In Nigeria, the Northern language group (or tribal, or ethnic, group) of Hausa is Muslim, while the Ibo and Yoruba are Christian. Thus, when a Hausa meets an Ibo, they assume the other's religion is Muslim and Christian, respectively. In the United States, Poles are almost all Catholic, and Swedes are almost all Lutheran—if, that is, they have any religious connection. Aside from the normal close connection between religion and ethnic group, religion in itself is culture-forming, and thus makes ethnic groups.

Thus "religion," except for periods of conversion and expansion, when members of many ethnic groups may be swept up in a religion, is in social context a category that acts very much like what we have called "ethnic group."

PERHAPS THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTION in setting a boundary to the term ethnic group is that of its relationship to *caste*: groups defined by birth and by origin from some distant ancestors, intermarrying, traditionally fixed in a hierarchy from upper to lower, and limited to specific occupations. "Caste" is identified primarily with India, and yet there are other cases. One famous one is that of the "Eta" or "Burakumin" of Japan.[1] The Jews in medieval and in early modern Europe were treated as a caste—they had a fixed low hierarchical position, intermarried, were limited to certain occupations, and had about them (to Christians) an air of ritual impurity.

Castes (theoretically) are permanent. One cannot "convert" to another caste, as presumably Jews could convert to Christianity, and thus lose the disadvantages of being Jewish. But it should be recalled that even converted Jews were viewed with suspicion in Spain, and they were never considered really as good Christians as the others.

This fairly lengthy introduction is, I feel, necessary in view of the widespread confusions, and in view of the fact that I will be referring on occasion to religious groups, racial groups, tribal groups, language groups, and be calling them all "ethnic groups." Let me try to justify this very inclusive term by answering the obvious question: What is *not* an ethnic group? Do I set any boundaries to the term? Yes, I do. After all, distant as our studies as sociologists are from the most

[1] They have been described in the fascinating book by George DeVos and Hiroshi Wagatsuma, *Japan's Invisible Race*, a work that argues that one can find some remnants of caste in most East Asian countries.

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respectable sciences, our terms must have some clear definition, and one means of making a clear definition is to set a boundary.

THERE ARE TWO IMPORTANT SOCIAL FORMS that are *not* ethnic groups. One of them is the political community; the State and its members.

Americans very often call a state a "nation," but in most European languages the Nation refers very specifically to the ethnic group, the State to the formal political organisation which grants citizenship. The close link between Nation and State arose because in the course of European history, and in particular in the 19th century, with the rise of nationalism, every nation demanded its own state. This led to the creation of modern Germany and Italy, the formation of ethnic European states out of the Ottoman Empire, the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire into its ethnic components, each organised as a State, and the creation of ethnic Nation-States out of the Western borders of the old Czarist Empire. The United States is perhaps unique among the states of the world in using the term "nation" to refer not to an ethnic group but to all who choose to become Americans. "The American nation," a perfectly legitimate term, is not limited in its usage to those of a given heritage. Despite this, Woodrow Wilson (with his emphasis on national self-determination) insisted that every *other* ethnic group, under no-matter-what political organisation, should have its own state. The vital contrast between Nation and State was obscured in large measure between the two World Wars when so many of the independent states of the world were organised on the basis of a single dominant ethnic group. Those who remained as ethnic minorities within such states hoped for eventual reunion with the Nation-State that represented their own ethnic group.

In the post-1945 world, the close link between State and Nation, which had dominated the state-making efforts of the post-1918 peace-making (and of the politics of Europe between the two World Wars) was again broken. For most of the new states that were formed out of the colonial empires were *not* "Nation States," *i.e.* states representing a single ethnicity. And yet the world, in revulsion to war and conquest, had become strangely enough strongly attached to "old boundaries"—any boundaries, set any way. The scores of new states formed out of the colonial empires simply accepted the old accidental colonial boundaries. These new states then were faced with the problem of—as they and others saw it—becoming "nations", moulding people of different ethnic groups into "Nigerians", or "Kenyans", or some other people.

The problems of the newly-independent states of Asia were somewhat different. There were ancient cultural traditions or imperial state boundaries which did not make frontiers quite as arbitrary as they were in Africa. But even there—in Pakistan, India, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia—the problem of creating a Single Nation became a severe one, varying in intensity from country to country. The problem in each case was: Would older identities—religious, linguistic, racial, and caste—submerge themselves in a new national identity? Or would they become (to use our problematic term again) *ethnic* identities, with some possible claim to their own kind of state existence? Would they soon be demanding political recognition of their separateness, with perhaps an ultimate claim to the right of secession?

The one social form, then, that is not an ethnic group is the State. This is so despite the fact that in European thinking (and, to some extent, in Asian) it is generally taken for granted that the ideal form of the State is one in which there is a state for each ethnic group, and one ethnic group for each state. In the circumstances of Africa, this is almost impossible—the conflict in creating any such format would be unbearable, and it has accordingly rarely been attempted.

There is certainly a tension between ethnic groups and states. As each state tries to become a nation, it attempts to reduce the intensity of subordinate ethnic claims. The problem is that both ethnic groups and states make claims to *ultimate loyalty*. And the state inevitably comes into conflict with any social form that has a competing claim to ultimate loyalty. At one time this competing claim was most strongly put forward by religion. With the decline of religion this competing claim is most strongly put forward by *ethnicity*.

Rupert Emerson has defined the Nation as a

> 'terminal community—the largest community that, when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty, overriding the claims of both the lesser communities within it and those that cut across it within a still greater society.'[2]

[2] Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (1960), pp. 95–6.

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A sound definition, from a European perspective, neatly separating French loyalty from the lesser loyalty of being Gascon or Burgundian, or the larger loyalty of being European or Christian. But when applied to Nigeria or to Malaysia it simply leaves us uncertain as to what the Nation is. As Clifford Geertz writes: "[It seems] to leave such questions as whether India, Indonesia, or Nigeria are nations to the determination of some future, unspecified historical crisis."[3]

States, then, are not ethnic groups, though the linking term "nation" can be taken as one or the other. Nations are not necessarily ethnic groups, though those that are not coterminous with an ethnic group try to create a new national identity, which (if they succeed) becomes a new ethnicity.

THERE IS ONE OTHER crucial boundary limiting ethnic groups. Social classes are not ethnic groups.

One is not born an unskilled worker, a clerk, a professional. One is born into a family whose head may hold such an occupation. Some social theories insist this means, in effect, that one's future occupation and income are fixed by birth. But if this were really so, we would not be so interested in "social mobility." Social mobility refers specifically to movements between the strata of society, from one occupation, income level, education standard, to another. Social mobility is one term that cannot be used to refer to the change of one ethnic group into another. Other terms are necessary. Just as "social mobility" applies specifically to the *class* phenomena of society, so do "assimilation," "acculturation," "conversion" apply to the *ethnic* phenomena. These are rather more exceptional processes than those of social mobility. They are not accepted—or expected—processes. It is true peoples assimilate to other peoples, and do change their ethnic identity over time. But it is more or less expected that the ethnic stock remains immutable.

Thus "ethnic group," in my usage, refers basically to the vertical divisions of a society in contrast to the horizontal divisions. The horizontal divisions refer to *class*; the vertical divisions to *ethnicity*. Sometimes they coincide, as in the case of the Negroes in the American South, all of whom were by definition for a long time in the lowest class (or, in view of their inability to rise, caste). And yet the distinction was plain. As the blacks rose, socially, to become doctors, professional persons, and white-collar workers, their *class* changed. But their *ethnic group* remained the same. Even in India, the classic land of caste, one observes a similar phenomenon. The correlation between caste and class becomes somewhat weaker over time. The caste groups do become, in my definition, "ethnic groups." Perhaps the best indication of this is that they are increasingly called "communities" as the social position of their members becomes more diverse.

IT IS ALONG THE BOUNDARIES between Ethnic Group and State (on the one hand) and the relations of Ethnic Group and Social Class (on the other hand) that we have witnessed in the past two decades some striking new developments. It is these developments which have made *ethnicity* a new and problematic force in internal and international relations. Let me state a proposition in connection with each boundary.

Proposition Number One (on the relations between states and ethnic groups). The old hope of nationalism, accepted in the peace-making after World War I (and to some extent after World War II)—for each Nation a state, for each State a nation—has receded into the distance. It becomes more and more difficult to grasp it effectively as a basis for international organisation. A number of developments have led to the recession of this model.

1. Too many new states have been created that are not, and cannot in the foreseeable future become, states of a given ethnic group. I refer primarily to the new states of Africa, to some extent to those of Asia. In these cases, we have seen the rise of a new concern with "Nation-Building." We have also seen the hopes for nation-building complicated or foundering on the basis of old lines of division—racial, religious, linguistic, tribal. Each division has taken the common form of ethnic group.

2. We have been surprised by the rise of new ethnic or quasi-ethnic identities and the sharpening of old ethnic identities in those states that were considered either models of contemporary modern Nation-States, or successes in having subordinated their ethnic divisions to the "terminal loyalty" of the Nation. Consider for

[3] Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States* (1963), p 108.

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example that model of patriotic commitment in World War I—Belgium. Look at it today: increasingly divided between groups that place their terminal loyalty more and more in the ethnic group of Fleming or Walloon. Consider Canada in World Wars I and II, with its apparently total commitment to War for the sake of the ethnic Motherland. See how delicately it now tries to reconcile the claims of French-speaking and English-speaking. Consider the remarkable, if still far from signal success, of Scottish Nationalism on the island of Great Britain, whose ethnic divisions seemed a few decades ago fully reconciled in the new identity of being "British." The United States was never a Nation-State, but certainly we have not seen as sharp a challenge in the hundred years since the Civil War of 1861–65 to the "terminal loyalty" of Americans as we saw in the rise of the militant Black Power movement (with its search for an alternative loyalty, marked even by such national symbols as a separate flag) or in the rise of new Mexican American and American Indian militant movements. Those states that are effectively single ethnic groups avoid such divisions. But few are so fortunate as, say, Sweden, or post-war Poland, made "pure" by massive population transfers. As old divisions in some states sharpen, others worry whether their old seams will rip open.

3. Many even of those older states that were ethnically homogeneous have become ethnically more heterogeneous as the economic developments of the post-War world have led to enormous migrations of labour. In West Germany, there are 2·4 million "guest workers," principally from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece, now forming 12 per cent of the labour force, and in some areas considerably more.[4] Germany cannot do without them; and more and more the guest workers settle down with their wives and children. Switzerland has, proportionately, even more. France has taken its foreign workers in large measure from Algeria, Spain, and Portugal. England has seen a substantial migration from the West Indies, Pakistan, and India, creating a permanent "coloured" population. In each of these countries the specific numbers and legal statuses vary; but in each of them a once remarkably high degree of ethnic homogeneity has been reduced by the introduction of new ethnic elements. The United States, from being an exception in the world because of its formation as a state out of many different elements, becomes more and more typical—as England struggles with its own colour problem, France wonders about the "integration" of the Algerians, and Germany considers how to educate the children of Turks and Yugoslavs.

4. The efforts of states, New or Old, to achieve "ethnic purity" are *not* leading to ethnically homogeneous states. Burma expels its Indians; Uganda evicts its Asian community, and other African states may do the same to theirs; Poland ejects even the pitiful remnants of its once-large Jewish community; and the Jews of other Eastern European states have migrated in large numbers to Israel. But, ironically, the attempts of some nations to become "ethnically pure" only complicate the problems of others. Britain's Asian community grows; and new Asian communities are established in other European nations, as a result of the expulsion of Asians from Africa. The Jews leaving Eastern Europe enter an ethnically mixed Israel, which is not—and never will be—without a large Arab population. There is still much debate over the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem and the causes that led Arabs to flee the emerging Jewish state. Whatever the reasons, undoubtedly many Jews believed that their problems in creating a new state would be simpler if they did *not* have a large Arab minority. But the creation of Israel as a 90% Jewish state also created a Palestinian diaspora. The Jews are now matched in their dispersion by resident Palestinian groups in many countries, one of the developments that makes the struggle between two peoples in the Middle East a world-wide one.

ASIDE FROM THE FACT that each nation's ethnic purification leads to another's greater diversity, one senses that the effort at purity, for most states, is a lost cause. The divisions in Uganda between blacks of different tribes are potentially far more severe for that state than the division between all Blacks and Asians. Few black African nations are ethnically homogeneous. The attempt to create some degree of homogeneity by the expulsion of Asians seems as futile as an effort to empty the sea.

[4] See, in ENCOUNTER, Theo Sommer, "Der Gastarbeiter" (November 1973) and Jonathan Power, "The New Proletariat" (September 1974).

. . . Resident aliens have been expelled from a number of African states. In November 1969, the Ghanaian government gave all resident aliens, African and non-African, two weeks to obtain residence and work permits or leave the country. The police were given

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> broad powers to search out and arrest aliens lacking the required papers, and bands of citizens attacked alien traders in public markets. Although a few aliens died in the Ghanaian expulsion, conditions for Nigerian traders expelled from Congo-Zaire were even worse. Those who were released after a year in detention reported numerous incidents of torture and death plus confiscation of all assets. Public pressure in the Ivory Coast led to expulsion of Togolese and Dahomeyans employed in the Ivory Coast civil service since colonial days. . . .[5]

I HAVE SAID ENOUGH, I hope, to give some plausibility to my first proposition. In the world as it is developing, despite tendencies to make some states "ethnically pure" (particularly in the newer states of Africa and Asia), more and more states become *multi-ethnic*. This is, in part, because of the universal commitment against boundary changes to make Ethnic Group coincide with State. (How many inter-state boundaries have, after all, been changed in the past 29 years? Fewer I would guess than in any period in history.) It is also because of the extensive international migration of labour (a migration that is almost the equal in scale of that which transformed the United States!), and because old ethnic divisions emerge in old states and new ones are created in new states.

And now to my second proposition on the relations between Ethnicity and Social Class. This, too, has developed in unexpected ways. My proposition here is that the Socialist hope for a trans-national class struggle, based on class identification, never came to pass. Instead, it has been replaced by national and ethnic conflicts to which combatants have often tried to give a "class character." The first great defeat of the Socialist hope was in World War I, when the large Socialist parties of Germany and France became patriotic, and fought on the side of their respective bourgeois governments against their national enemies (instead of, of course, together with their "class comrades" of other nations against their respective bourgeoisies). The second great defeat came with the rise of the Third International under Soviet Russian domination. Despite the heightened rhetoric of class warfare that characterised the Third International's Communist parties, it became increasingly evident that they were serving the national interests of Russia. After World War II, Communism was more and more closely integrated into a number of national movements. Chinese, Yugoslav, and Cuban Communism were clearly as "Chinese" and "Yugoslav" and "Cuban" as they were Communist. The language of international class warfare still persists. The reality however is quite different, for it masks the state interests of Russia, China, and the minor Communist powers. The antagonism of the classes and the opposition of their interests are severe in many countries (particularly the non-Communist countries of the developing world), but in most countries national interests and ethnic interests seem to dominate over class interests. India, despite its severe internal class conflicts of interest, is never so united as when it is fighting China—or Pakistan. We have witnessed some classic class warfare in recent decades, in particular in China and Cuba and in some other developing-world countries. But we have rather more frequently seen severe ethnic conflict and even bloody ethnic warfare.

Marxists try to interpret all conflict as "class conflict." Indeed in the ethnic conflicts of the post-War world there is always a class component. One group is more prosperous, owns more of the means of production, or is a more effective competitor in economic activities, than another. Economic interest undoubtedly plays a role in ethnic conflict. But this is far from saying ethnic conflict is simply "masked" class conflict. What, in the conflicts of Catholic and Protestant in Northern Ireland, of Hausa and Yoruba *versus* Ibo in Nigeria, Hutu *versus* Tutsi in Rwanda, Chinese *versus* Malay in Malaysia, Anglophone *versus* Francophone in Canada (and so on), is the "terminal community . . . that . . . effectively commands men's loyalty"? I would say it is increasingly the *ethnically*-defined community rather than any exclusively *interest*-defined group. The evidence for this is too strong to be dismissed.

IN THE LIGHT of these two propositions—that Ethnicity becomes less and less coincident with state boundaries, and that Ethnicity becomes a stronger basis for "terminal loyalty" than class—we can proceed to draw some consequences of importance for international relations.

LET ME FIRST RECALL—and put to one side—the more traditional and better-known relations between ethnicity and international relations. These relations can be

[5] Frances R. Hill, "Genesis of a New Exodus," *Harvard Political Review* (Spring 1973), p. 9.

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described as the effort to make Ethnicity coincide with State borders. It has taken the form of "*irredentism*"—where one group, subjects of a state dominated by a different group, tries to rejoin the major part of the ethnic group in another state. Its other form is national independence movements, where an entire group is subject to a state dominated by another.

Obviously this is a real problem and still continues. But this, I would suggest, is perhaps steadily less important in the relations between Ethnicity and international conflict—because of the previously-mentioned fact that State borders have become oddly immutable. After World War II, many states became independent; some states had revolutions; some partition lines between states established after the war became international boundaries; and some states were partitioned. But even the newly-partitioned states (Viet Nam, Israel, Kashmir) in which new boundaries had to be established, have found it difficult to get those boundaries to take on the same immutability as the boundaries created by post-1918 and post-1945 settlements. Multi-ethnicity used to appear as irredentism. We can still find some classic irredentism—for example, the case of the Somalis in Ethiopia. But, increasingly, what we would once have called "irredentism" must be called simply *multi-ethnicity*. There is no easy way to make Ethnic boundaries and State boundaries coincide. Ethnic groups, owing to migrations and economic interrelationships, are less and less definable by physical boundaries.

IT IS THESE NEW TENDENCIES towards *multi-ethnicity* (combined with other social developments) that, in my view, create new problematical relations between Ethnicity and the inter-State system.

One of the most important of these developments is the creation of an international system of communications. It makes the spread of ideas and ideologies from one state to another, from one troubled situation to another, ever more rapid and effective. "Ethnicity", as a part of culture, always had to be taught. But it used to be taught by parents to children, by teachers to students, by leaders to followers—*i.e.*, in traditional settings. More and more, Ethnicity and its possible implications are taught by the mass media. One group learns from another, and picks up its language, its demands, its resentments, its forms of organisation. It has become commonplace to say that the Blacks have taught through their example other ethnic groups in the United States to raise certain demands, to use a certain language, to feel resentment at exploitation and subordination in contexts which they had previously accepted. This is obviously true. What is striking to me is how much the movement of Black militancy has affected other groups in *other* countries.

In the West Indies, we have seen the emergence of "Black Power" movements—a rather unlikely term, since these movements are directed against black ruling classes as well as white economic interests in largely black societies (but the power of the American term, spread by the mass media, was evidently irresistible). In Canada, the French Canadians had their own reasons for resentment at the dominant position of the English-speaking Canadians; but one of the best known books about their situation calls them "*white niggers*"! Similarly, Northern Ireland had its own deep conflict, and it has an even longer history than that of Blacks and Whites in America. But the Catholic movement was first called the "*Civil Rights*" movement, in clear imitation of the Black "Civil Rights" struggle in the United States, even if it is arguable how much it owed to the inspiration of this struggle. The "Oriental" Jews in Israel (of lesser education, income, and power than the "Western" Jews) had their own grievances. But the actions that led to world-wide attention were initiated by "Black Panthers," again the borrowing of a term from the American struggle.[6] And, similarly, the developing colour conflict in England has been influenced, on the part of the coloured groups, by developments in the United States, and on the part of government, by the actions taken in the United States.[7]

THESE EXAMPLES of the international communication of ideas, slogans, demands, with one ethnic group and one ethnic struggle influencing another, also reflect of course the dominant position of the United States in the international configuration of communications. But the communication is not, I believe, all one way. One example of an ethnic struggle that has had some effect on other inter-group relations is the Israeli-Arab struggle. As I have pointed out, both groups have inter-

[6] See, in ENCOUNTER, Amnon Rubinstein, "Jewish Panthers and Other Problems" (June 1972).

[7] See E. J. B. Rose et al., *Colour and Citizenship* (1969), and Anthony Lester and Geoffrey Bindman, *Race and Law in Great Britain* (1972).

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national diasporas. The image of the Palestinian Freedom Fighter has been as heavily imprinted on world public opinion as the images of a Martin Luther King or Angela Davis. The two diasporas internationalise the struggle. The Palestinians find their targets in many countries.

But the internationalisation also means that it is copied, and that it influences other ethnic conflicts. The Black militants in the United States and the Croatian nationalists in Sweden both borrowed the technique of "skyjacking" from the Palestinians. The Israeli-Arab struggle leads to a tension between radical groups and Jews in the United States, in France, in Germany, because the Far Left identifies with the Palestinians. The Jews of Poland, completely assimilated, are accused of "Zionism" in the wake of 1967 (and in their emigration add to the small Jewish community of Denmark). In Africa, Black states were once divided between support of Israel or of the Arabs. They were variously affected by the historical memories left by Arab conquerors, missionaries, and slave traders; by white European colonialists; by their current ideologies; and by the cash or credits one or the other party could give them. There are even reverberations of the far-away struggle in the local internal politics of African countries. President Amin of Uganda has accused the Israelis of trying to overthrow him, while Uganda's former President, Milton Obote, accuses Amin of using Palestinian liberation forces in carrying out genocide against his opponents. ("Dr Obote names both Libya and the Palestinian liberation organisations as among those assisting in killings in Uganda. . . ." "Ex-Ugandan Head Charges Genocide," *New York Times*, 27 May 1973.)

The new patterns of communication are, I believe, one of the most potent forces in insuring that ethnic concerns and ethnic issues will remain serious forces and will indeed grow in seriousness. The increasing ease of air travel—combined with the existence of wide economic disparities between nations and the increasingly liberal attitude toward immigration of European states and other states with populations of European origin—guarantees that every Ethnic group can develop a Diaspora. It thus makes its problems of significance to more than one state and its neighbours. The ease of air travel also means that ethnic struggles can be fought out on a world-wide stage, involving nations that are on the surface completely removed from the struggle. The Israeli-Arab struggle has, perhaps, had the widest geographical scope. Letter-bombs explode in England, India, and Malaysia; Cypriots, Greeks, Turks, Israeli diplomats are seized in Thailand; Israeli athletes killed in Munich; Arabs are shot in the streets of Paris and Rome. The Indian-Pakistani struggle also has its international scope, as young Pakistanis are killed in the attempted seizure of Indian offices in London. Croatians, now settled in Sweden and Australia, carry on their warfare against Yugoslavia. This has led to a protest from the Australian Prime Minister to Yugoslavia because "Croatians of Australian citizenship" were executed in Yugoslavia. Within Australia, the conservative opposition has protested against government investigations of the Croatian nationalists.[8]

Thus a number of factors, it seems to me, are leading to the internationalisation of ethnic conflicts, to a "universalisation of ethnicity."

1. There is, first, the increasing difficulty, if not impossibility, of making Ethnicity and State coincide. The United States, as a nation formed of many peoples without territorial concentration in any part of the country, first demonstrated this impossibility. It had to become a multi-ethnic society. Now England, France, Germany, the nations of old Europe, the developing nations of new Africa, the ancient nations of Asia are all forced more and more to come to terms with an ethnically mixed population, whose mixture (as long as the world remains open or free to travel and settlement) must grow.

2. A second element in the growing internationalisation of Ethnicity is the rapid growth of international communications. This has made the creation of Ethnic Diasporas easier. It has created multi-ethnic societies in homogeneous ones. It has also meant that the images of identity and struggle are now spread everywhere, with significant effects in heightening ethnic consciousness and strengthening it in its conflict with other claims on terminal loyalty.

3. About a third factor leading to the internationalisation of ethnic conflict I am less certain. But I think I can at least propose as an hypothesis that we are, increasingly, refusing to accept as moral—and by "we" I mean what may be

[8] "Australia Plans Croatian Inquiry", *New York Times*, 29 May 1973.

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vaguely called an international community of public opinion—the exploitation or persecution of an ethnic minority by a state. We increasingly refuse to accept this as an "internal" matter. The international relations of South Africa, Rhodesia, and Portugal are decisively affected by their racial policies. Soviet Russia has been insistent that all conflicts affecting its ethnic groups are purely internal matters—but the Russian Jews have successfully challenged this position by making their demands for emigration a matter between states (in this case, the United States and Russia). The treatment of American Negroes certainly affects America's international image—the cases of Angela Davis and other Black militants received (if possible) more attention in Western Europe than in the U.S.A. The Developing World has tried to argue that its ethnic conflicts should be left to itself, and that the outside world should not intervene. Even that may be breaking down. It was impossible to keep the situation of Bengalis in Pakistan an "internal" matter (even though many people argued that for the "peace of the world" it should be so considered). No ethnic issue can remain simply an intra-state issue, in part because of the growing number of diasporas, but also perhaps because of the developing world conscience which tries to reconcile state claims with ethnic claims which are more and more felt to be legitimate. Nigeria was, perhaps, most successful in "internalising" the civil war against the Ibos; and the outside world has stood aside, too, from the sanguinary conflict between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. But even in that distant and obscure struggle we have seen the United States criticised (*New York Times*, 11 June 1973, "U.S. HELD REMISS IN BURUNDI CRISIS") for not playing a larger role. Thus it is not only international diasporas but also a globalised conscience which serve to universalise ethnic conflict.

WHAT I HAVE DISCUSSED up to now—migrations, international communications, world conscience—all leave aside the initial question: Why have ethnic identities and demands become so significant in the first place in so many different countries, with such varied historical backgrounds and economic and political institutions? Can we find any *general* developments that have accentuated the role of the Ethnic, and in general made it more salient?

This is an enormously difficult problem, and various theories or fragments of theories have been propounded. Perhaps the most ambitious general theory argues as follows. In the modern world there is a loss of traditional and primordial identities because of the trends of modernisation. This means: urbanisation, new occupations, mass education transmitting general and abstract information, mass media presenting a general and universal culture. Now all this *should* make original ethnic identities—tribal, linguistic, regional, and the like, all the "primordial" identities—weaker. However (as this argument runs) in mass society there is the need in the individual for some kind of identity—smaller than the State, larger than the family, something akin to a "familistic allegiance." Accordingly, on the basis of the remaining fragments of the primordial identities, new ethnic identities are constructed. Thus, the varied tribal groups in the cities of Africa form ethnic associations and merge into larger groups—which seems to be the origin of the large tribes (*e.g.*, Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba). The process is similar to that which affected the transatlantic European migrants from East European and Southern European villages—in the U.S.A. they developed a special Polish, Italian, Slovak, identity. The trends of modernisation, even while they do destroy some bases of distinctive culture and distinctive identity, create a need for a *new kind of identity* related to the old, intimate type of village or tribal association. Thus does the new ethnic group, as a political and social possibility, come to life.

This is one of those large social theories that seems impossible to test, to validate, or to refute. It makes sense. The world-wide scope of "ethnicisation" is matched by developments that are considered causative and are themselves of a world-wide scope. There are some other general theories that might be mentioned. Egalitarianism is the dominant social philosophy in the world, and it comes in all forms.

Egalitarianism legitimates a group's demands that its deficiencies (in income, occupation, political power) be made good, and *now*. It justifies the expulsion and liquidation of trading and merchant peoples (such as Asians in Uganda). Why, however, does not the egalitarian thrust emphasise *occupational* and *class* identities more? Why does it not lead to more class conflict, and less ethnic conflict?

THIS IS THE HEART of the darkness. Why *didn't* the major lines of conflict within societies become

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class conflicts rather than ethnic conflicts? It is of paradoxical interest to note that in the developing world the dominant ideology among students is Marxism. Yet the dominant political forces have been, first the drive for Independence, then the defence against and attack on Neo-Colonialism, then conflicts with neighbours, along with efforts to create a "national identity" at home. In most developing countries Marxism remains the ideology of the students and often of the ruling group—but *ethnicity* is the focus around which identity and loyalty have been shaped. Sometimes the two themes of class conflict and ethnic conflict are merged (as in the Chinese theory of the "Third World" as a rural world exploited by the urban developed world). It would seem that to make class conflict at all effective it must now be joined to ethnic conflict—as in the case of the revolutionary Cubans who, in liquidating their own middle class, insisted they were also fighting the North Americans (imperialistic, racist, and arrogant).

Admittedly the powerful thrust to egalitarianism *can* be attached to class conflict as well as ethnic conflict. Ethnic conflict, however, seems to have become more effective in reaching and drawing upon the more emotional layers of the human and social personality than class conflict. Class conflict is rational—it is based on the defence and expansion of interest. Ethnic conflict is rational in this sense, too—but it fuses with the rationality of class conflict a less rational, an irrational appeal, that seems to connect better with powerful emotions.

Is this because it brings to mind such primal things as the shapes of one's body, one's image and colour, one's language and religion, the earliest experiences in the home and in the family?

It would seem that the rallying cries that mobilise the classes have, in recent decades, had less power than the rallying cries that mobilise the races, tribes, religions, language-users—in short, the Ethnic Groups. Perhaps the epidemic of ethnic conflicts reflects the fact that leaders and organisers believe they can get a more potent response by appealing to *ethnicity* than they can by appealing to Class Interest. In the best of cases, the appeal is a double one, since almost every ethnic group is disadvantaged in relationship to some other; and so, by appealing to class interest and ethnic interest together, the White European (and his descendants wherever they may be) can everywhere be marked as the Enemy.

If Ethnicity is a permanent part of the modern world, and the multi-ethnic form is increasingly common within each nation (owing to the factors I have been describing), then we see the need in each country, for new approaches to the handling of multi-ethnic conflict. In the historic past, powerful and forceful assimilation was a dominant approach, combined with permanent subordination of certain groups called "inferior". Neither approach will survive long in the contemporary world. The spirit of egalitarianism assures us that each individual and each group will make its claims to just and equal treatment and will find strong support for its claims. Perhaps the answer to multi-ethnicity in each country will be a situation in which each group has guaranteed rights and guaranteed shares in the economy, the polity, in social life. It is possible to emphasise different parts of this solution: either guaranteed shares for each group, or guaranteed rights for each individual and each group. The United States in the past seemed to find the approach in terms of "guaranteed rights" more congenial than the approach in terms of guaranteed shares; but recently Americans have begun to take individual rights less seriously, and to take group shares more seriously. I think the American experience will prove to be only one of the possible ways in which a modern state deals with the problems of multi-ethnicity. Our experience—since we are the most diverse and complex of multi-ethnic societies —may serve as "a model" for some, may at least serve as a storehouse of trial-and-error experience for others who come to view what we have done and consider whether they should go and do likewise.

Yet aside from conflicts *within* nations, the world-wide spread of ethnicity as a significant basis for political action raises serious questions about the relations *between* nations. In a world in which the arrant nonsense of Marxism competed with the tepid confusions of liberalism, the problems of Ethnicity, as a source of conflict within nations and between nations, have generally appeared as simply a left-over, an embarrassment from the past. It is my conviction they must now be placed at the very centre of our concern for the human condition.

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Tom Mangold

The Case of Dr Rose Dugdale

FEMALE REVOLUTIONARIES are rare flowers, and they do not tend to keep their bloom very long. Patty Hearst, machine-gun in hand, was a tragic California 90-day wonder, and Diana Oughton blew herself up with a home-made bomb in Manhattan. Ulrike Meinhof turns pale and wan in a German prison cell as she awaits trial on charges of terrorism and murder. The Japanese "Red Army" boasts of a few star girl performers, and the Palestinian cause achieved some fame a few years ago with a hi-jack artist called Leila Khaled. But the French, once the home of the *tricoteuses,* turn out nowadays only a reforming Minister for *La condition femme.* And the English? Has England ever been a congenial soil for ladies who feel the call to climb the barricades? Consider the case of Dr Rose Dugdale, now 33, just condemned for her so-called revolutionary activities. Is she at last our own La Passionaria, a Devon Krupskaya, a Joan of Arc with an Oxford degree? A more unlikely Amazon of ideology would be hard to conceive.

SHE WAS BORN into a wealthy and privileged background in March 1941. She was a so-called "Blitz-Baby", but shielded by birth and distance from the War. Her home was 600 fertile acres set deep in the Devon countryside. Her father is Colonel Eric Dugdale, a successful insurance underwriter, head of a Lloyds syndicate specialising in shipping and aircraft insurance. Her mother, Caroline, had been married first to John Mosley (brother of Oswald Mosley), a union that ended in divorce. A family friend says Caroline sought respectability and security in her second marriage. If one parent dominated Rose's younger days it was Mum; an imposing, intelligent, slightly formidable woman whose ambitions for her daughter were fiercely conventional by the standards of the wealthy post-War middle class. Rose's upbringing was traditional. She had a French governess, "*Mamselle*", with whom she was close; she had servants, a lot of green fields and horses to play with. She was forbidden to speak to village children, and was obliged to curtsey to guests when entering the room. But it was an undeniably happy period for her. Betty Turner, a cousin, remembers the young Rose as "a most attractive girl, a child full of vitality, happy . . . full of laughter, a great giggler . . . devoted to her father."

The Dugdale wealth came from the cotton mills of Lancashire—"good honest money" Miss Turner calls it, made out of the Industrial Revolution. There was enough money around to settle some £80,000 on Rose later in life. Mr and Mrs Dugdale's ambitions for Rose were simple enough—she would stay rich, marry well, and settle comfortably into what must have appeared in the 1950s to be a guaranteed life-style. Eric Dugdale was to explain to his daughter much later in life:

> "I have tried to provide for you as well as I could on the principles I had conceived to be right. I therefore managed, not without hard work and some sacrifice, both from your mother and me, to provide enough for you to be shielded from want and enjoy a measure of independence. I would have thought that everything had been made easy for you. . . ."

Education was private and very exclusive. She went to Miss Ironside's, a private academy for Ladies in Chelsea. Mum and Dad lived in a large house in St Leonard's Terrace—a chauffeur-ride away. From Chelsea she went on to France,

TOM MANGOLD*'s article is based on the extensive research and tape-recorded interviews he did for a documentary shown recently on the BBC-1 "Midweek" programme.*

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Germany and Switzerland where she attended various finishing schools. So far so good. But the first hint that the wrong programme may have been fed into the computer came in 1958 when Rose declared she wished to go to Oxford. Further education had not been planned for her, nor was its immediate value made clear to Mum. One of those nice little family bargains was struck to sort out the impasse. Rose agreed to "do the London season" (Mum's great wish) in return for studying for the Oxford entrance. It remains unclear why Rose went into the social season with such distaste. It may have been purely personal; she was not a raving beauty, but rather a strong well-built woman with her Mother's dominating jaw-line. Or it may have been that Rose sincerely saw no value for herself in the season as "a deb." Rose herself was to say of that period:

"I did it very reluctantly, refusing to take part in anything more than I had to. As a debutante I was out on the social register and invited to parties and balls which I hated . . . God! . . when I think of the money that was wasted on the whole business. Each dress I wore was tailor-made by Worth, and my coming-out ball was one of those pornographic affairs which cost about what sixty old-age pensioners received in six months."

Society photographer Una Mary Parker who took the pictures of Rose remembers Mrs Dugdale fretting around her daughter during the sessions.

"Mrs D. was ambitious. She wanted her daughter to be one of the leading debutantes of the year, and do all the right things and go to the right places and meet the right young men. As soon as Rose walked into the drawing room in a white organdie dress, white gloves and a little row of pearls, and a tight perm, looking absolutely miserable and most dreadfully awkward, you realised that this girl should never have been pushed into doing something like the deb season. And I think she was very bolshie about the whole thing. She was very ungainly and unhappy about the whole thing—it was a very sticky session. I think maybe Rose should have stayed down on the farm. . . . You know . . . with the horses."

When the social scientists eventually begin their research into the sources that fed into Britain's revolutionary fringe what will they find—poverty, grinding misery, hopeless social displacement? Or will it really be the agonies of happy snaps at Una Mary's place followed by a late night fox-trotting at the Hyde Park Hotel?

In the event, Rose claimed her end of the parental bargain. In 1959 she went up to St Anne's College to study philosophy, politics, and economics. With the move came a sartorial change that was to stay with her to the end. The white organdie dresses, and the velvet shoes and the one-offs from Worth vanished to be replaced by a new Dugdale uniform—men's shirts, men's trousers, "sensible" shoes. She distinguished herself by dressing as a man and invading the then male preserve of the Oxford Union—it was more of a giggle then than the subsequent hairier episodes that were to mark Women's Lib. Her close companion for that jape was Jennifer Groves who remembers nothing very radical about the Oxford Rose at all.

"Well the funny thing is, she was extremely right wing. We were asked for example to write an essay on the House of Lords and out of the five of us, Rose was the only person who undertook to defend it as an institution. I can remember her saying that breeding counted for something and I suppose this was because she came from a wealthy background and at that time she was not in revolt against it."

ROSE CAME DOWN with a disappointing Third. But nevertheless she was given an assistantship at the exclusive women's college of Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts where she obtained an American Master's degree in philosophy. She wrote a thesis on Ludwig Wittgenstein. The choice of the subject is seen as significant by Dr Anthony Storr, a psychiatrist who has studied aspects of the Dugdale case.

"It's a strange choice for a young woman doing a Ph.D. thesis or whatever it was. Granted she read

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some philosophy, but Wittgenstein is, I suppose, the most remote from human relationships perhaps of all philosophers and one of the most difficult, and I think it fits in with her psychology to have chosen him as the object of her study. . . . You might have expected her, for instance, to get interested in social problems, in sociology or in political philosophers, something of this kind. But no, she chose the most detached and the most remote of 20th-century philosophers and one of the most difficult to understand."

Rose's American period sees her driving around in her specially imported MG sports-car and writing pretty little pieces for the college magazine. There was still nothing to suggest that this slightly manly, intelligent girl was destined for the barricades.

SHE RETURNED to England in 1964, traded the MG for a smart red Lotus Elan. Through her former Oxford tutor she got a job for a while with the UN in New York, and on her return to London she was given a post at the Ministry of Overseas Development where she specialised on trade prospects for developing countries. Two people in her life, Theresa Hayter, a contemporary left-wing activist (and daughter of ex-Ambassador Sir William Hayter), and Peter Ayrton, a student rebel, saw this job as the beginning of the real radicalisation of Rose.

THERESA HAYTER: "I think the job gave her the opportunity to judge or understand the function of aid to underdeveloped countries and the fact that it's used to prop up corrupt right-wing governments and to preserve a situation from which North Americans and Europeans profit . . . out of which they can enrich themselves. . . . I'm sure she must have been affected by the prevailing radicalisation among students at the time."

PETER AYRTON: "Her work at the Ministry was specifically around commodities, that is for instance cocoa, jute and things, sisal or whatever it's called, to see how in markets, in commodity markets, and the main one is London, you see, how the price of those commodities is manipulated or can be manipulated, and how this can have disastrous effects on the economy of those third world countries . . . and that is they can never predict from one year to another, even from one day to another, how much money they're going to have, so that it's for instance impossible for them to make any planning for building roads or hospitals or anything."

If Rose ever had any hope of changing things from the inside they didn't last long. She stayed only a short while at the Ministry and then in 1966 enrolled at Bedford College, London University, to expand her Master's degree thesis into a Doctorate of Philosophy. A year later, the college appointed her to a year's lectureship in Economics in the sociology department. A year after that it was 1968, and there was a new scene. In Paris and Prague, Chicago and London, student radicalism was uncorked. Ideology ran rampant. Everyone had a theory and a sacred cause. Rose felt the call by deciding to visit the Mecca for any pilgrimage of the New Left—Castro's Cuba. She volunteered to join a charter-load of students visiting Havana under the auspices of the French Viet Nam Solidarity Campaign. If this visit did provide the catalyst then it was remarkably untraumatic. In Paris they were heaving cobblestones at the CRS; in Prague they were hurling bottles at Russian tanks; and in Chicago they were breaking up Mayor Daley's Democratic Convention. Weren't things rather quiet on the Cuban front? Peter Ayrton went on the trip with Rose:

"Well, apart from a certain amount of coffee planting which was very good for people like us who actually didn't do that amount of agricultural work, we went around talking to people and visiting people and generally being shown what socialism was like in that country."

She listened to a couple of Castro speeches that went on for a bit, was impressed by the relationship between Fidel and the masses (the way people offered him sandwiches and things), was led to believe that the traditional relationship "between leader and led" seemed to have been abolished. One small anecdote from Ayrton does show Rose learning how to cross the class and language barrier and to make it with the peasants.

"I think that what always amazed me was her outgoing nature. . . . This is extremely rare for someone, say, with that background she has in terms of speaking to anyone, in terms of speaking to people in pubs, speaking to people in the street; she obviously has a certain obstacle in that she has a certain education and that she talks with a kind of posh accent. But that has never kind of stopped people being able to immediately relate to Rose as a kind of human.

"I can tell of one example. When we were in Cuba there was a dance, a dance organised in some small village in the country. And at that dance young people had been invited, and we were all dancing together and the older people had not been invited, because I think it was felt like that we wouldn't get on too well. I think actually Rose saw these old people who were looking in from the outside, totally kind of amazed and she insisted that they be brought in, and the Cubans there said 'OK, they can come in' and these old peasants came in, and she immediately proceeded to dance with them, and she didn't even speak Spanish, but she kind of related for the whole evening. . . . But she had absolutely no problem of getting on with people from totally different background and spoke totally different language and everything."

This surely is how the New Left in Britain will want to remember Rose, more as a social worker

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than as a bombster; dancing nicely with octogenarians in a Cuban village, transcending the social and cultural barriers. One now could belong to the People. Of course it is not the whole truth, but for the embarrassment she was to bring to the Movement, it was a consolation.

ON HER RETURN FROM CUBA, the break with her family was almost complete. She had become increasingly, especially to her parents, incomprehensibly militant. She began looking into various indigenous causes. She met with the anarchists of the Angry Brigade. She offered to stand bail for Black Power demonstrators. She was active on the "Civil Rights" front and even took part in the occupation of the London School of Economics. She was everywhere but, significantly, she joined nothing. Although introduced to the International Marxist Group by Theresa Hayter she didn't sign up as a Trotskyist. Theresa Hayter herself explains that Rose was "impatient with the slowness of political work on the Left as it was carried on in Britain at the time."

Rose took a flat in Tottenham High Road, and opened at her own expense the Tottenham Branch of the "Claimants Union." If she had a creed it was a form of "direct action", a species of libertarian anarchism. She threw herself into a campaign to "help the poor and deprived." She tried to get free school milk for children, bought and distributed free coal for pensioners, assisted squatters, and interrupted local council meetings by shouting down councillors on behalf of her "clients." She stood bail and paid the legal costs of neighbours and tenants in trouble.

And it was in Tottenham that Rose was to meet the man she still calls her common-law husband, Walter Heaton, the one man who was to have a profound and lasting influence on her life.

WALLY HEATON, now 43, is the son of a Leeds mill-worker. He ran away from home at 16, joined the Irish Guards, eventually became a militant shop steward at the Standard Bottle Company in Wood Green, North London. He once led an unsuccessful "work-in" after the closure of the plant. When Rose met him, his working-class credentials were impeccable. He was a big drinker, coarse yet with a veneer of charm. He had a gift for rhetoric and he was a petty crook, having done his last stretch in 1966 (in all he had twelve convictions for minor crimes ranging from robbery to driving offences). Their short but hectic union was to have echoes of a sort of urban Bonnie and Clyde set in the slums of North London. It is a poor analogy but they did share an explosive attitude of disturbed and anti-social confusion.

Wally's main problem—for Rose, and for the Revolution—was that he was married, and had two children, one a 17-year-old daughter. He has remained, even in prison, ambivalent about his marriage; and although he treated his wife appallingly, there is as much evidence that he wanted to maintain the union as destroy it. Friends in North London maintain to this day that the Heaton-Dugdale amalgam was not a political love match, but that "Wally knew a meal-ticket when he saw one." For a while anyway, Rose simply moved in on the Heatons' council flat and an odd social *ménage* began. Mrs Audrey Heaton is bitter about those days:

> "She (Rose) was really scruffy, she dressed very erratically, she was dirty, her hair was unkempt. She'd sit on a chair with her legs up, with a cigarette dangling from her mouth. Her fingers were black with nicotine, and well . . . her language was obscene at times, but you know, she had that nice accent with it. It just wasn't natural.
>
> "They'd come up here [to the flat] and talk to each other and ignore me. One night, I was sort of uptight about it and I threw a cup of coffee over Wally. I was really mad; they were sitting toasting each other with their cups of coffee, speaking in Gaelic. I couldn't understand it. And they used to leave me right out of the conversation. I used to tell them to get out, but they completely ignored me. There was nothing I could do about it."

Both Wally and Rose had been mugging up their Ireland. Both had read Karl Marx's critique of the colonisation of Ireland by Britain and both were deeply committed to the Irish Republican cause. It was in 1972, and the Irish Republican Army was heavily into a new campaign against Britain. Rose and Wally had a grand cause on their doorstep now, more potent than free coal for pensioners, more immediate than Viet Nam, more interesting than squatters' rights, more exciting than racism in the urban ghettos; but it was a cause which alarmingly, to them, had just not taken off in England. Neither seemed to understand that Belfast was not Saigon, that most British soldiers were working class (and sons of working class), and that a murdered soldier in Ulster would nowhere be accepted as a triumph for the New Left in Britain.

For now both merrily brought some blarney

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and stage-Irish drinking to North London. The drinking in fact became a neighbourhood problem. The spongers saw Rose coming a mile away; there were regular fights at the bar, and mammoth bouts of boozing that led three North London pubs to close their doors to the couple. To add to their problems, Rose and Wally had yet to solve the situation with Audrey Heaton. Things were coming to the boil there.

> MRS HEATON: "Well, I found them together in bed. I became rather hysterical you know. . . . It was a shock. He'd had affairs all his married life but I'd never come that close to it. Well, I smashed up the room, and she [Rose] just lay there, and, you know, as if it were quite natural. I told her to get out. She got out of bed and she left, and later I found a note just inside the front door that Rose had put for Wally. Naturally I opened it, and it read: 'Dear Wally, it was beautiful, I'll see you soon, Comrade, *Rose*' . . . "

In a remarkable attempt to untie that Gordian knot, she proceeded to buy Audrey Heaton off. It cost the not inconsiderable sum of £25,000, plus a further donation to Wally himself of £10,000. Rose informed her father she wanted to sell her shares in the Dugdale Trust. A painful correspondence followed between father and daughter. Colonel D. wrote to Rose: "If I was able to touch you I would have tried to influence you against Wally."

Mrs Heaton says the cheque for £25,000 came out of the blue. On the day she took the money to the bank, Wally prudently accompanied her and suggested, even in the bank, that they make up their little differences. "The point is", claims Audrey Heaton,

> "Wally wanted her [Rose's] money and he wanted me. But Wally, you know, it's funny really, because he thinks he's doing this for the working class, and they should be on top all the time, and yet he's so materialistic. He'd come back here on occasions and I'd say: 'Don't come back because you're living with her, and I just don't want to know that life!' And he'd say, 'Well, what more do you want, you've got money, you've got coloured TV.' He'd really go on about it, and I think the trouble is he wanted his cake and eat it too, and he wanted me too."

The first thing that happened to that £25,000 was that Wally bought himself a big Mercedes-Benz and a whole wardrobe of new clothes. His consumerism and his sartorial elegance remained a striking contrast to the by-now increasingly masculine appearance of his girl friend. It's been said that Wally was one of the few people who accepted Rose for what she was; certainly her sexual ambiguity neither embarrassed nor concerned him. They remained inseparable.

FOR COLONEL DUGDALE, the period was excruciatingly difficult. Still set in the mores and traditions of a class and life-style that his daughter now detested, he wrote a short piece of advice to his daughter. It was a simple motto, he said, which he had learned in the Army:

"Money lost—little lost; honour lost—much lost; heart lost—all lost. . . . I can only hope that you keep your honour and your heart."

Further on in the letter, Colonel Dugdale, in a rare but bitter outburst, wrote:

> "During my life I have lived through two wars and I know that the condition of life of everybody in this country has improved beyond all measure and it is still improving. It surprises me that someone of your acute intelligence does not notice this and that you are not the first person to see that it is completely illogical to brand a whole class of people as being either honourable or dishonourable. I believe that our family have made some contribution to the improvement of life in England. The family on both sides comes from the lines of stock, on one side they have sacrificed their lives for their country, three or four at least died during the wars of 1918 and 1945. On the other side our families have provided employment at a fair wage and under decent conditions of service, and I do not think either branch of your family have anything of which to be ashamed. I wrote you a letter some weeks ago and I told you I would never slam the door. Although you have had all the money that I have to give, you will always find a welcome if you return."

Rose replied five weeks later:

> "*Dear Daddy*,
> I hope that you won't shelter under such sanctimony as accusations that I have cut all love between us away. As one of the boys across the water said to me the other day, I will die fighting the oppressor but I will give my life for the poor people. So let's not have any more about the self-sacrifices of our ancestors who died while ordering the men out over the trenches to death for nothing but the well-being of a handful of rich men who own the world: there will always be a place for you amongst the brave men who are prepared to shoot in the back those commanders. The jolliest time for Lloyds was the last war, was it not? When Guardsman Heaton takes your money it is his for the taking. You can't take your accumulated theft with you of course, though you can be a man who refuses to dishonour himself and family whilst mothers with children are thrown on to the streets which their ancestors built."
>
> *Love . . . ROSE*

BY NOW Wally and Rose had run out of money, and new funds were needed to help the IRA campaign in Ulster.

Both had already made several trips to the North, meeting rather theatrically with alleged IRA gunmen. Both claimed they were involved in "Community Action" in Catholic areas of

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Belfast and Derry, and that they brought Protestant and Catholic children for outings to North London. There is no evidence of this. They both took part in a Civil Rights March in Derry, and were arrested for a few hours by the British Army after a rumpus at a check-point at which they refused to identify themselves.

What remains a complete mystery to this day is why neither, but particularly Rose, had the wit to use their "English cover" for really serious undercover work in Ulster. Instead, an unusually devious scheme was evolved to raise money for the cause. Through Wally, Rose was introduced to a colourful ex-crook in Manchester, Ginger Mann.

If ever there was a moment when Rose's need to relate to the class whose cause she had adopted was strongest, it was the moment she walked into Ginger Mann's front room in Manchester. Here was the exciting possibility of an historic military-political alliance—the solidarity of the middle class, the working class, and the criminal class was imminent.

Ginger was a South London villain from way back. Early on he had helped to set up the notorious Kray Twins gang which was, but without him, to dominate London's criminal underworld for nearly a decade. He is a small, tough red-head, who wears the conventional (if now slightly outdated) "bum-peeper" jackets and tight trousers that were so fashionable in London ten years ago. He is intensely suspicious, conservative, and in fact about as politically radical as the Covent Garden fruit-porters who support Enoch Powell. Rose put her plan to Ginger:

> "She wanted me to set up a firm, a criminal firm which would be, you know, pretty sophisticated for doing big robberies and to steal arms, ammunition, explosives. This sort of thing, you know. First of all we was to look around for the things and then plan to rob. Anything that would bring money for the IRA cause, you know.
>
> Well, in the beginning I thought it was a laugh really. But after a while I began to get a bit worried because I thought to myself, what I am doing actually, is sitting with these two people and others, and conspiring to commit treason, and it's not only that I am not that kind of animal, but I wouldn't do it, I wouldn't do it anyway. You know there's a lot of bird [prison] involved with treason."

WHILE GINGER SLOWLY figured that one out, Rose, with three of his accomplices, decided to rob Yarty Farm, her childhood Devon home. Her father's wealth, for so long the focus of her ideological hatred, would at last be put to her idea of practical use.

She travelled to Devon and appropriated some £80,000 worth of family paintings and antiques. It was a clumsy and amateur operation. Ginger Mann, meanwhile, had finished wrestling with his conscience, and he began to have conversations with the Special Branch. It was only a matter of weeks before Rose and Wally, as well as the others, were caught and tried.

THE TRIAL ran through the summer of 1973. Rose tried to use the Exeter courtroom as a political platform, emulating the tactics of cases like the Angry Brigade, Angela Davis, the Chicago Seven, and maybe even Dmitroff. The highlight was a ferocious cross-examination carried out by Rose, standing in the dock, of her father who appeared as a prosecution witness. She told him:

> "There is a massive battle between us which nothing will remove but the disappearance of one of us. . . . I love you, Daddy, and if there were any danger threatening you, I would stand between you and that danger. But I hate everything you stand for."

Yet curiously enough, Rose pleaded Not Guilty, and claimed she had been forced to cooperate in the burglary under the threats of her associates. This declaration of innocence made her revolutionary stand look a little unprincipled, perhaps even counter-revolutionary. Indeed the circus atmosphere she attempted to create seriously detracted from her political intentions in the dock. To the public, it was worth a good giggle—"The Reluctant Deb turned Revolutionary" made a number of useful tabloid page leads. But it was difficult to see how the downtrodden of Tottenham or the IRA benefited from the experience.

On 22 October she was found guilty of the burglary. Wally was found guilty only of handling stolen goods. With characteristic verve Wally eloquently warned the Judge:

> "You cannot imprison Rose and me because we don't exist. But we are everywhere—invincible, incorruptible and indestructible."

Rose was given a two-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay £5,000 costs. The Judge, who must have been cursing his juridical luck at drawing these two at Exeter—of all places—was again warned, this time by Rose:

> "You have turned me from a recalcitrant intellectual into a freedom fighter. I cannot think of a finer title."

Good-naturedly, the Judge told Rose he didn't think she would do this sort of thing again.

Wally copped six years in prison for handling

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stolen goods, and he underlined the historic enormity of the sentence with the remark:

> "Not since Christ has there been a greater travesty of justice."

Ginger Mann, who felt himself well out of the fiasco, had the last laugh and offered the last word:

> "They were, I suppose, you could call them really fanatics, especially Rose. Rose was very, very fanatical. Although what she was up to, or what she was trying to get was bent or political bent, she was still straight, you know. Her background made her straight. Yet I could never trust Rose Dugdale at all in any way, and I was surprised really at the tie-up with Wally. . . . It didn't seem . . . you know . . . it didn't seem sort of natural."

Ginger admitted that the one thing that had worried him most, apart from being expected to form a firm with an upper-class rich girl from Devon, was the sound of Wally and Rose, together, hurling obscenities at a TV film of British troops in Northern Ireland on the evening news bulletins.

> "It suddenly dawned on me like . . . we were all going to go out thieving to get guns to kill soldiers. Now I don't feel special about the soldiers, but they're a bit like me, aren't they. . . . Got a job to do and so on. . . . Why should they be shot in the back by us?"

POLICE WERE ALREADY investigating certain arms smuggling allegations involving Rose when she left Exeter Court. Just how far she had progressed in that direction during her Manchester days is not yet known. Certainly, she had the contacts, and within a couple of months of the Exeter trial she vanished from North London. Bonnie without Clyde. Rose without Wally. It was never to be quite the same.

The IRA had begun to have a direct appeal to her Republicanism, her Marxism, her aggression, her infatuation with a total commitment to a single-minded attachment. It was, anyway, a lean time for unemployed freedom fighters. Viet Nam was over, Chicago was over, Prague and Paris were quiet again. Britain had failed to respond to the good old Irish cause, but one could still operate over the water. Thus she became associated with—it would not be quite right to say she joined—one of the most traditional and conservative revolutionary groups in the World—the Irish Republican Army, Provisional Wing. She fell in with a group of IRA activists in the border town of Strabane—probably an Active Service Unit, cleared by the Army Council to perform certain assigned acts of local terrorism. It was a glamorous and free-wheeling unit, with some hard-heads, some boozers, lots of ideas and rebel songs, not much action.

On 22 January of this year, a woman calling herself "Stephanie Grant" booked into McFadden's, a small Irish hotel in a remote and windswept part of County Donegal. The woman was accompanied by two men, and all three posed as journalists. "Stephanie Grant" had already contacted the pilot of a private helicopter firm—as a journalist from Leeds she merely wanted to hire the chopper for a trip to Tory Island just across the water.

Two days later the woman with three other men took off from the back of the hotel in the helicopter. Within the minute it was hi-jacked. One man produced a pistol and ordered the pilot to fly to a nearby monastery. Miss Grant, who sat next to the pilot, produced a map. The first air-raid in the history of the IRA had begun. Significantly, only a short while earlier, the IRA's Seamus Twomey had boasted in an interview with the *Daily Express* that the IRA would one day soon be making use of air power.

THE HELICOPTER LANDED on a jetty near the monastery. The men got out and ran to an old cow-shed where five ten-gallon milk-churns, each loaded with about 100 pounds of explosives, had been hidden. They dragged the churns out and began loading them, but soon discovered there wasn't enough room for all five "bombs." One had to be left behind.

The helicopter took off, heading for Mulroy Bay, Strabane, and there came more trouble. The pilot couldn't maintain height with the four churns aboard and warned Miss Grant that they'd all be crashing within a minute or so. Two loaded churns were thrown out of the helicopter, and landed harmlessly in Mulroy Bay. The great air attack was now down to two milk-churns, and the pilot was ordered to make for Strabane Police station.

One of the over-eager IRA men lit the fuse in one of the churns prematurely. It began to splutter unhappily away inside the helicopter. The danger that it might explode inside the machine created a little confusion. The fuse was ripped out by hand, making the bomb harmless. Then No 4 was tossed out into a river. With just one fifth of its fire-power left, the IRA Air Force began its horror raid on Strabane. The last milk-churn dropped, and fell into a rose garden off

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target. It split open and failed to explode.

At a time when British military morale was not at its highest in Ulster, the great air raid gave the Army almost the best fillip since El Alamein. Major Richard Earle, First Battalion Royal Fusiliers, happened to be in a position to watch the raid from the ground:

> "I think the effect generally was good for morale because it's always satisfactory to see one's enemy making a fool of himself. There was some useful discussion in barracks on this new military weapon —the *AGMIC*—the air-to-ground milk-churn, and some unfavourable comparison between this attack and others which we've been subjected to in the past, such as Dunkirk and Tobruk."

The girl from Miss Ironside's, the girl who had invited Cuban old age pensioners to have a dance, was beginning by February 1974 to achieve some sort of revolutionary fame, even notoriety. Evidence of her alleged involvement in the air-raid farce was mounting, and so were the old gun-running charges she had left behind in England. Special Branch very much wanted her for questioning; the British system, of course, fails—sadly for journalists anyway—to emulate the FBI's graphic Ten Most Wanted list. The British Army in Ulster (with what has been claimed to be an unfortunate lack of liaison with the Royal Ulster Constabulary) issued a "*Have You Seen This Woman?*" poster throughout the province. To the titillation of the tabloid press, it stressed Rose Dugdale's masculine appearance. But the publication of the poster blew open a careful RUC ploy to trap her, without fuss, in Londonderry. She was still free to strike a blow for the Revolution with her finest caper.

AT 9.30 P.M. ON FRIDAY, 16 April, three armed men and a woman calling herself "Vanessa Kelly" broke into the County Wicklow home of Sir Alfred Beit. A bit of aggro was performed on Sir Alfred before he and his wife were tied up. Then Miss Kelly strode round the home in her newly-bought skirt and jumper. Using a Stage-French accent she selected some eight million pounds worth of Sir Alfred's private selection of paintings—including a Vermeer, a Goya, three Rubens, and a Gainsborough. It was all over in less than a minute.

Rose Dugdale originally faced charges of having been involved in this robbery. But for one reason or another, they were subsequently dropped. She was arraigned on only one charge of receiving stolen goods comprising 19 Old Masters.

The tactical purpose of the robbery (for crime afficionados, it was a push-over to perform) was to lean on the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, in the case of the Price Sisters. Dolours and Marion Price were the young Provo bombers who had been convicted for their part in the London Old Bailey explosion. They were in prison in England and they were demanding their right to be in an Irish prison in Ulster. A ransom demand for half-a-million pounds for the Beit collection was also made.

Was all this official Provo strategy? The reason for the overt non-involvement and non-support by the Provisional Wing of the IRA soon emerged. David O'Connell, a senior member of the Provisional Army Council, was furious about the raid. According to his analysis, the British Government would never capitulate to 19 pieces of inanimate coloured canvas no matter how valuable. More than that, the great Beit Art robbery was in danger of hogging the headlines from an imminent—and successful—hunger strike by the Price Sisters. He was also less than amused at finding police road-blocks all over Ireland at a time when he wanted to travel peaceably about his IRA business. O'Connell, in a tight-lipped and unhappy interview, had this to say about Rose:

> "Well, Dr Dugdale was not a member of the Republican Movement. She was known to personnel in the Movement. She had been to Derry way back in the days of the Civil Rights and so forth. From what one knows she was a very dedicated person, one with deep convictions. . . . However, it is a known fact that the IRA was not involved in procuring any of those [Beit] paintings."
>
> "Was she ever a member of the Provisional IRA?"
>
> "No, she was not, no."
>
> "Did you know her?"
>
> "Not personally, no."
>
> "Well, where was she in terms of the [Republican] Movement?"
>
> "Well, she was on the fringe."
>
> "Was she much talked about before the robbery?"
>
> "Not really, no. She wasn't, no."

By the time she drew nine years in Dublin for receiving the paintings, she was well on her way to becoming an un-person. The scene was crowded with people like O'Connell, shouting disclaimers that they had known, or encouraged, or worked with her.

SHE WAS ARRESTED in a little holiday cottage in

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County Cork. The paintings were in the cottage. If she might have wished for a dramatic, climactic Bonnie and Clyde shoot-out at the end, it was not to be. She came quietly. Faced by Detective Chief Superintendent Tony McMahon, Ireland's top detective, she immediately began to harangue him: "Do you consider yourself a good Irishman, or do you agree you have betrayed your country?" McMahon yawned politely, and began recording the facts of the case in his notebook.

It looked suspiciously like a piece of old-fashioned plea-bargaining. Rose pleaded guilty to receiving, and the other charges were dropped. It was a rotten bargain. She drew nine years and failed to make much of her last chance to use a bourgeois courtroom as a revolutionary platform. She did manage to get in a couple of clenched-fist salutes, one or two "*Up the Provos, the People's Army!*", and a mild attempt at the old oratory:

> "I stand in absolute condemnation of the Government of Ireland, which trading on the victories of our armies in the North is wheeling and dealing with a government of murderers, assassins, and torturers in London. . . ."

She went on hunger strike in prison in sympathy with the Price Sisters, and she stopped when they stopped. For her pains, she received not one word of solidarity or gratitude from either the martyred Price Sisters or her "People's Army." The cruel silence was echoed by the New Left in London, where the wall graffiti still refer to the old *Oz* obscenity trial. There has been no sign yet of the first "*Free Rose*" legend.

IN NOVEMBER she went on trial for the helicopter "bombing flight" over Strabane. In the Dublin courtroom where Irishmen were used to defending their own causes, Ms Dugdale from Surrey was given rather less freedom to plead for her vision of a truly free Eire. She began, on the first day, with a stentorian call for "true justice"; but on the second day, as she tried to continue her harangue in the courtroom ("Nothing will wipe us out—we are thousands—we are everywhere. . . ."), she was cut short in the dock and carried struggling back to her cell. When the time for sentencing came (27 November), this time the bewigged judges on the high bench of Capitalist Justice took her previous Marxist hints about class discrimination; she was given nine years in the penitentiary (to run concurrently with her earlier sentence), while her proletarian mates got only six.

THOSE WHO KNEW HER reasonably well were unkind with their epitaphs. Ginger Mann wrote her off as "an out and out Mug, doomed to failure." Maureen McGuire, a leading London Irish Republican who knew her well, commented: "She was the greatest mug that ever lived. She gave up an awful lot . . . for something very negligible." Theresa Hayter, who knew her slightly, said she was "very brave."

The feeling close to family circles was that Rose was just a little mad. This is an allegation without the slightest foundation and, anyway, too convenient by half. She was examined after the Exeter trial and found quite sane.

In an interview, Dr Anthony Storr acknowledged "personality problems" but no more.

> "I think one must assume that it isn't just a matter of political convictions. I think it only reasonable to assume that there are personality problems of some kind which are feeding this kind of behaviour well. I would guess that she was probably a person who'd been rather isolated in some ways, that she was a person who hadn't been at all confident in her sexual role as a woman, and therefore looked for other ways of bolstering her self-esteem or making herself feel effective, and I think you can't explain her behaviour simply in terms of 'I'm repudiating this rich background' . . . and that kind of thing.
>
> "It's only guesswork, but I think identifying with the underdog is obviously one feature of her behaviour which one very much sympathises with; also he [Wally Heaton] represented a kind of disinhibiting factor. If you've been brought up in a fairly rigid conventional way, it's rather nice to find somebody who can throw off the traces and get drunk and mess about in pubs and be generally uninhibited. That may be one reason for the attraction. Also: the attraction of criminality is quite considerable for rebels."

What may most tease Dugdale scholars of the future is the precise nature of the relationship between Rose's hostility towards her parents and her hostility towards the "political system." Dr Storr again:

> "I don't think you can separate that in her case. Probably if you dig deep enough into anybody, you can't separate it entirely, because any rebellion is bound to be a rebellion against the past and the parents are always going to be symbols of that to some extent. But what's such a pity about this is that all this energy should be so misdirected."

Rose Dugdale had a brief walk-on part on the stage of protest politics. She wanted to change the world, and was small-changed by it. She read a pamphlet by Lenin and thought she knew what was to be done. Cuba remains Cuba, without her social dancing. North London (and its pubs) has settled down again now that Rose has gone. The Price Sisters will be getting their prison transfer

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thanks to the Price Sisters and not Rose. Sir Alfred has all his paintings back on his walls. They've filled in the hole the milk-churn made in the back garden of Strabane police station. Even Audrey Heaton is thinking about going back to Wally once he comes out of the jug.

Rose wrote me a letter while in prison—a long, rambling six-page ideological polemic. But it scarcely adds to the literature of revolution. Rose Dugdale is no Rosa Luxemburg.

Is the case, then, of Rose Dugdale uniquely British? Unlike Ulrike Meinhof or Bernardine Dohrn, she killed no one, maimed no one, and it is unlikely she even made a dent on anyone's mind.

Now she is the most famous woman prisoner in Limerick. What can she still do to help make the Revolution? Proselytise the prison staff? Attempt a daring escape? Go in for a hunger strike or two? A girl who put Miss Ironside's behind her and carried Wittgenstein in her kit on to the barricades just can't lose them all.[1]

[1] She didn't, and made a good new start by not losing the baby which apparently no one knew she was carrying. A boy, weighing 7lb. 8oz., was born in her prison cell on 12 December 1974. She immediately announced that she had committed the infant to becoming "a guerrilla fighter."

From the West

Sent from the west
where fashions die more slowly
and the sun comes down—
We write "This place
is perfect. Who

could ever be unhappy here?"
A short walk
out to the shops, exact
provisions parcelled up—
a loaf, brown eggs.

The light goes gently
on these soft horizons;
all the books we brought
we have not read.
Words, words. . . .

Four bright squares
of landscape and a postmark
speak for us;
our only messages
are Greetings

from the yachts, the picnics,
ponies nuzzling our children's
sugared hands, and from
a central silence
in the empty blue.

John Mole

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George Feaver

Wounded Knee

& the New Tribalism

The American Indians (1)

moving forward and back
from the woodland to the prairie
dakota women
weeping
as they gather
their wounded men
the sound of their weeping
comes back to us

. . . brave warriors
where have you gone
ho kwi ho ho

INDIAN WAR POEMS[1]

WHEN FIGURES released by the U.S. Census Bureau last year confirmed that Chicago, Illinois, had overtaken Los Angeles in population to regain its traditional place as the second largest city in the nation the news must have struck a responsive chord in the breasts of many Chicagoans. It was as if a natural historical pattern had reasserted itself. For in matters of bigness the Windy City had always cast itself as the only serious competitor of New York City in the metropolitan growth sweepstakes, the Avis of America's great cities, perennially trying harder to overtake the comfortable lead of the Hertz of its class.

I was recently reminded of the friendly rivalry of the two urban giants as a flight I was on made its final approach into Chicago's O'Hare Field. Passengers had just been routinely reminded to fasten their seatbelts in preparation for landing when the pilot broke in, acknowledging in a distinctive midwestern twang that Chicago was his home town, and boasting lightheartedly that O'Hare's claim to be the busiest airport in the world was only one of a number the city could make to greatness, including the fact that Chicago's Polish population was second in size only to that of Warsaw, and that the city is nowadays the site of the world's tallest building.

He was referring to the gigantic new 110-storey headquarters of the Sears-Roebuck Company, taller indeed than the Empire State Building or the World Trade Centre or any other building that Chicago's arch rival in such matters might care to name in the way of serious competitors. Looming through the smog the huge structure dwarfed the John Hancock Tower as well as lesser skyscrapers stretching out along Michigan Boulevard.

The view had certainly changed since "the good old days"[2] when Sears began life as a tiny Illinois mail order house in 1886 and America was still a predominantly small-town society barely embarked on the road that would lead it to its complex destiny as a 20th-century superpower. And yet, the old-fashioned Western energy that the casual visitor to Chicago cannot help but feel, a vitality born of the city's brawling historic origins at the very cutting-edge of Eastern American civilisation and sustained by the influx of steady streams of restless migrants from the Atlantic seaboard and Europe and later

[1] *War Poems* I, III (translated from the Anishinabe by Gerald Vizenor) in Shirley Hill Witt & Stan Steiner (eds), *The Way: An Anthology of American Indian Literature* (1972), pp. 135–136.

[2] As in David Cohn's fascinating *The Good Old Days: A History of American Morals and Manners as Seen Through the Sears-Roebuck Catalogues* (with an Introduction by Sinclair Lewis), 1940.

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from the Southern States, all of them drawn by the promise of economic betterment as Chicago matured into a rich clearing house for East-West commerce, seemed somehow assured in the pilot's breezy enthusiasm for his home town and the exploding skyline below.

Sears-Roebuck was founded only a few years before the distinguished cultural historian Frederick Jackson Turner, sensing a watershed in America's historical evolution, wrote his famous paper of 1893 on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." Turner's dramatic thesis was that the basis of America's special national character was to be found in the perennial rebirth of the frontier as the early growth of population led to continuous westward expansion. He believed that the frontier had instilled in Americans their cherished ideals of discovery, democracy and individualism. But he surmised that by the closing years of the 19th century the era of the frontier was waning, and with it the "first period" of American history.

Eventually, with the steady growth of America's industrial might and with rapid urbanisation and the irregular absorption of waves of dispossessed European immigrants, alternative theories offering updated explanations of American national character, theories associated with the names Beard and Handlin, Myrdal and Glazer, Boorstin, Hartz, Lipset and others, arose to join the frontier thesis in the market-place of fashionable ideas. I had been put in mind of perhaps the most powerful and sustained of these theories by our pilot's reference to Chicago's Polish community. For if the frontier thesis turned the imagination of generations of Americans to the promise of rural America, the countervailing notion that the urban centres of the New World represented a cultural "melting pot" in which men of good faith and differing ethnic, racial, and national origins might throw off the oppressive shackles of their European past and replace them with the assimilationist, equalitarian aspirations of American civilisation[3] was to constitute no less influential an historiographical thesis, immortalised in Emma Lazarus's celebrated exhortation (on the base of the Statue of Liberty):

> *Give me your tired, your poor,*
> *Your huddled masses yearning to be free,*
> *The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,*
> *Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,*
> *I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*

Whatever their surface differences, the frontier and "melting pot" theses shared a common subscription to the cultural values of openness and cosmopolitanism. Circling above the present-day panorama of sprawling metropolitan Chicago I wondered whether the theories were still alive or hopelessly antiquated as America entered the 1970s. Would Turner have seen the ever-rising skyscrapers of America's great urban conurbations, her skylabs and moonshots and planned trips to Mars and into the heavens beyond as merely a second or even third "period" in the continuing American thrust towards the frontier, now more vertical than lateral, plumbing the awesome resources of modern technology in a psychic transmogrification of the frontier ideal? And had the "melting pot" thesis run its course in Chicago and elsewhere in contemporary America, enervated before the daunting facts of racial enmity and city-centre decay, grown weary before the cynical rejection of assimilationist values and the alarming appeal of a rising mood of ethnic and racial retribalisation? Or was it, like the frontier imagery that recurred in the phrases of poet and politician, still deeply engrained in the aspirations of the nation?

ONCE IN THE PASSENGER TERMINAL, I discovered there was a two-hour delay in my connection flight and wandered down the crowded concourse from the ticket counters to the newsstand. There was the usual assortment of confectioneries and tobaccos, cheap "souvenir of Chicago" gifts, a rack for local and out-of-town newspapers, and a section given over to paperback novels and detective thrillers. But what immediately caught my eye was an entire shelf, looking rather like the multiple advertisements of Paris metro stations, filled with copies of Dee Brown's best-selling *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West,*

[3] "American" is used throughout this discussion as synonymous with "United States." The Canadian case, it has been generally conceded, differs from that of its great neighbour to the South in the relative unimportance, as factors affecting the formation of Canadian national character, of the frontier and the melting pot. For further exploration of the distinctions see, on the frontier, Seymour Lipset, "Canada and the United States: A Comparative View", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* (I, 1964), pp. 173–192, and J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History", in Carl Berger (ed.), *Approaches to Canadian History* (University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 63–83; and, on the melting pot, John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1965).

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"the powerful story" (as the cover exclaimed) "that haunts the nation."[4] Here, it seemed, was a simultaneous revival with a vengeance of the symbols of frontier and ethnicity. I purchased a copy to keep me occupied while my flight to Seattle made its way across Iowa and South Dakota and on into Montana and Idaho before touching down in the Pacific Northwest.

En route, flying at 30,000 feet, we passed over the Black Hills country of South Dakota. The desolate beauty of the region, even from five miles in the air, evoked memories of America's rugged and often violent pioneering past. Francis Parkman long ago caught the area's mood of primitive romance when he wrote wistfully in his 19th-century classic *The Oregon Trail* of

> the wild cavalcade that defiled with me down the gorges of the Black Hills, with its paint and war plumes, fluttering trophies and savage embroidery bows, arrows, lances, and shields . . . never [to] be seen again.

And certainly South Dakota bristles even today with historical reminders of those epic days. Invisible to the naked eye as we streaked westward above the empty plains, close to Mount Rushmore and the geographical centre of modern America, there stands a monument to the great Sioux chief, Crazy Horse. And nearby Custer State Park commemorates the feats of General "Long Hair" Custer and the men of the U.S. 7th Cavalry who fought (and senselessly died) with him at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Fifty miles to the south-east on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation another marker signifies the site of the infamous Massacre at Wounded Knee where, fourteen years after Custer's "Last Stand", the protracted engagements of the Indian Wars came to a close.

In fact, effective Indian resistance had already been broken before the date of Wounded Knee. But, as with the frontier imagery, the dramatic legacy of the tragic clash of Indian and white cultures lived on in the American imagination, kept alive at first in Wild West shows, later in banal Hollywood westerns, and later still, in the team names of the professional sports world. And just as America's recently-arrived ethnics seemed with the passage of time to disappear from view as they scrambled up the middle-class ladder of economic advancement, leaving their Polish, Italian, Jewish, Irish and other ethnic identities behind as they subscribed to the ideals of Melting-pot America, so too the real-life American Indian shrunk from sight. He did so, however, for a different reason. Destitute and diminished in spirit and in numbers, he remained separate and unassimilated, hidden from aspiring middle-class America in the terribly anonymity of city slums, or beyond the dusty roads and barren fields of the massive Federal reservations where he typically lived out his unproductive days in depressing shanty towns.

As I READ Dee Brown's account of the original events, Wounded Knee had again been in the news. Early in 1973 militant supporters of the American Indian Movement had seized the historic hamlet and held it for 71 days to publicise the plight of America's oldest and, by many measures, most destitute minority. The bizarre events at Wounded Knee seemed to have resurrected at the single stroke the imagery of the frontier. But, more than that, they also seemed the very epitome of the disturbing ascendency of a New Tribalism in American public life that posed a direct challenge to the assimilationist premises of the "melting pot" thesis and implicitly denied the values of the open society.

[4] N.Y., Bantam Books, 1972 (16th printing). First published in 1971 and subsequently issued by Book of the Month Club, Playboy Book Club, and Popular Science Book Club. A *Times Literary Supplement* leader review offsets the dust-jacket claim in commenting that it appears to be characteristic of a proliferating genre of popular works of U.S. history that consist of "the application of liberal consciences to dramatic episodes." See "The Dispossessed Americans", *TLS* (21 July 1972), pp. 144-5.

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NOW, IN ONE SENSE, the "melting pot" was never more than a dream, an unfulfilled yearning as old as the Republic. Already by 1908, when Israel Zangwill's flag-waving *The Melting Pot* was a smash-hit on Broadway, the thesis flew in the face of reality. For, while the quest for a single American nationality held the spotlight in public affairs, ethnic ties persisted unabated in the social life of the nation. To be sure, it was traditionally understood by the hyphenated American where the emphasis of loyalties properly lay. Indeed, to become ever more American was a uniform aspiration in a nation founded on immigration. "With the exception of the Indians" writes Norman Mailer,

> we are a nation of rejects already once transplanted by the measure of every immigration of the last three hundred and fifty years."

And the anthropologist Margaret Mead has pointed to the immigrant's obsessive desire to belong as an important key to understanding America. In his relentless determination to see his offspring succeed by becoming more American than himself the immigrant unwittingly exaggerates his own foreignness. He thus encourages the eventual rejection by his children of his values as lacking in civic authenticity, a phenomenon carried over into political life in the characteristic American ambivalence towards authority.[5]

Cultural health in a society of immigrants has, therefore, meant striving to maintain a moderate tension between pride in the historical fact of one's ethnic past and the pre-eminent demands of American citizenship. Cultural sickness has meant the degeneration of this bifurcated loyalty into a morbid preoccupation with being "more American" than others. And indeed, the typical course of nationalist extremism has traversed a route leading from ethnicity through mild patriotism to rabid pro-Americanism—*i.e.*, the replacement of one set of tribalising values by another.

THE PURSUIT OF THE DREAM of a single nationality, then, has commanded a pivotal position in the unfolding story of American civilisation because it represents an idealised midpoint between the pull of ethnic divisiveness and the tug of extreme nationalistic holism. In the opening chapter of his pioneering study of the Negro in America Gunnar Myrdal drew our attention to just this point in noting the meeting place in America's peculiar brand of nationalism of diverse cultures overlaid with unified ideals. He traced these ideals to the humanistic liberalism of the Enlightenment and suggested that, at its best, the American creed has its roots in the universal values of the open society. More recently, William Lee Miller has reiterated Myrdal's theme, in asserting that "the merit of the United States is its relationship to a social ideal beyond the roots of a tribe" while allowing that "at its worst Americanism is a tribal morality, like any other tribal morality."[6]

The modern historical connection between ethnic politics and tribal values lies in the tendency for an exaggerated emphasis on special group status to abet a general withdrawal from the values of the open society—and to encourage a narrow parochialism in politics which, in its extremities, passes over into exclusivist doctrines of nationalism or racialism. For this reason, as I have suggested, while ethnic ties persisted in the social life of the United States, the traditional morality of American politics held that they should not be allowed to form too overt or dominant a feature of the nation's collective political behaviour. Thus, when the late Robert Kennedy (in the midst of his 1964 N.Y. Senate campaign to unseat incumbent Kenneth Keating) unthinkingly provided a candid assessment in a late-night radio interview of his strength in New York's Jewish, Italian, Irish and Negro communities, he caused an uproar for so cynically suggesting that hyphenated Americans would stoop to such low political tactics as to vote in ethnic blocs! The traditional normative assumption of American liberal democracy (at least in so far as Senatorial and Presidential politics were concerned) was that the common man was a shrewd, independent, and rational calculator in the polling booth. His choice would unfailingly fall on the candidate who, aloof before the divisive proclivities towards religion, race, and creed in the social market-place, would judiciously work for the fuller realisation of the individual's republican freedoms.

ALL THAT HAD CHANGED by the end of the 1960s.

[5] See Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry: An Anthropologist Looks at America* (1942); Norman Mailer, *Marilyn, A Biography* (1972).

[6] See Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma, The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, (1944), Chapter 1, "American Ideals and The American Conscience", pp. 3–25; William Lee Miller, "Some Notes on Watergate and America", *The Yale Review* (Spring 1974), pp. 321–32.

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Bill Dickinson Jr. (of *Editorial Research Reports*) noted on the eve of the 1972 Presidential elections that

> American politics is undergoing something akin to a reversion to tribalism. Voters are being split into ethnic, religious, cultural and economic blocs in a manner which suggests that something quite profound is shaking the political system.

And indeed, the so-called "ethnic strategy" was to be a persistent theme in the political reportage of that election year.[7] Radical chic was by then *passé*. Ethnic chic had become the latest word in political fashion.

MANY TRACED THE ORIGIN of these developments to the separatist arguments of Black militants during the mid '60s. As Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan were led to comment about the persistence and even intensification of ethnic identity in New York City (in the Introduction to the second edition of their *Beyond the Melting Pot*);

> ethnic tensions were greatly exacerbated by the rise during the 1960s of a peculiarly virulent form of black anti-white rhetoric that the white élites tolerated and even in ways encouraged because it was, in effect, directed to the same lower-middle-class and working-class groups which they themselves held in such disdain. . . . Doors were opened to blacks everywhere [in the city] which would never have been opened to a Pole or a Slovak with similar credentials. And the blacks took it as their due. Which, in any large perspective of American history it most certainly was, but this was not necessarily self-evident to white workers two or three generations away from the life of peasants on the feudal estates of Europe.[8]

The noted Negro political commentator, Bayard Rustin, writing in *Newsweek*, linked the Black Power Movement of several years before even more explicitly to the "new tribalism" in contemporary American political life.[9]

The changing mood revealed itself on all sides. Suddenly "Archie Bunkerism" (in Britain "Alf Garnett", in Germany "Alfred Tetzlaff") was the order of the day. Fast on the heels of successive waves of Black, Brown, Yellow and Red Power, the advent of "Ethnic Power" was proclaimed on buttons and T-shirts bearing messages like "*Kiss Me, I'm Irish*!", "*Perogy Power*!" and "*Dress British, Think Yiddish*!" As *Time* was moved to comment, "with Americanism under something of a cloud, people are rediscovering their ethnic roots. . . ."[10]

THE REDISCOVERY moved at a dizzying pace. Mafia-boss Joseph Columbo and supporters from the Italian-American Civil Rights League picketed New York's F.B.I. headquarters on Manhattan's East Side. They later drew 100,000 demonstrators to a rally at Columbus Circle to

[7] William B. Dickinson, Jr., "Tribal Politics", *ERR Daily Reminder Service* (11 October 1972); Mark Levy and Michael Kramer, *The Ethnic Factor: How America's Minorities Decide Elections* (1972).

[8] Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City* (1963; 2nd ed. 1970), pp. lxxiv–lxxv.

[9] Bayard Rustin, "Black Power's Legacy", *Newsweek* (13 November 1972).

[10] Edwin Warner, "The Usefulness of Obsolete Ideas", *Time*, 3 September 1973. See also John Morsell, "Ethnic Relations of the Future", *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (July 1973), and Joseph W. Scott, "Ethnic Nationalisms and the Cultural Dialectics: A Key to the Future", *The Review of Politics* (October 1972), pp. 55–68.

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protest at the use of the terms "*Mafia*" and "*Cosa Nostra*" in the film of *The Godfather* which (they claimed) unfairly implied that all gangsters are Italians. The League also launched a protest against the marketing in New York City of "The Godfather Game, A Game For All The Families" that came in a violin-shaped box imprinted with a sub-machine-gun. Meanwhile, Irish-American militants picketed the United Nations in the wake of disorders in Northern Ireland. Mrs Eunice Kennedy Shriver, addressing an East Baltimore gathering during the 1972 presidential race at which there were displayed a conspicuous number of "POLISH FOR NIXON" buttons, explained that because she came from a "proud Irish family" she understood how proud the Poles were of their heritage. Certainly they were: the editor of a Polish weekly in Clifton, New Jersey, *The Post Eagle*, had already announced the formation of an "*I'm Proud to be Polish*" club and plans for a Polish Anti-Defamation League. "Polish jokes" were definitely out. A U.S. Public Health Service manual that claimed Germans are probably better than Poles at "naming the months of the year forward and backward" was ordered destroyed because it contained ethnic slurs. The new sensitivity soon spread to smaller ethnic groups as well. *The Wall Street Journal*, no less, reported on its front page of 11 July 1973 that Armenians, Rumanians, Ukranians, Greeks, and numerous other small nationalities in America were undergoing a revival of interest in their cultural heritage.[11]

The new ethnicity was generally heralded as a praiseworthy illustration of the healthy diversity and pluralism of American society. For most hyphenates, the relative weighting of their ethnic and civic loyalties in favour of a moderate patriotism remained clear.[12] Yet, coincidental with the rise of the moderate Ethnic Power phenomenon, other developments that were greeted less sanguinely by careful observers—developments springing from the same root idea of bifurcated loyalties but including the more disturbing additional premise that the meliorist and assimilationist values of the traditional political system should be abandoned in favour of a narrower focus of loyalties—arrived on the American scene. Arguments were increasingly heard for the special treatment of certain groups whose grievances had nothing to do with ethnicity or race but were based on generalised notions of suffering inflicted on oppressed status minorities by the hand of the assimilated, insensitive, and "normal" majority. Thus, leaders of Students', Women's, Gay and Grey Power spoke for groups whose membership was ascriptively stipulated by the exclusivist criteria of youth, womanhood, homosexuality, and old age.

Their plausibility once admitted, the curious new status politics seemed to know no limits, as old-line Democrats, undergoing an experience already visited on the groves of academe and the corridors of government, learned to their dismay when they awakened from their lethargy to find the 1972 McGovern Nominating Convention chosen according to a once-despised un-American "quota system"! The alarming "Decline of the WASP" that Peter Schrag had recently recorded was now a part of the received orthodoxy. The old order was superseded in politics not merely by the rise of the Unmeltable Ethnic but by the positive awakening of a New Tribalism.[13] One editorial writer surveyed with a slightly jaundiced eye the prospects of achieving a more truly equalitarian society in terms of the new mood; and he was put in mind of Kurt Vonnegut's short

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[11] The trade journal *Editor and Publisher* reported on 28 November 1970 that the ethnic press was thriving in America, with some 440 newspapers printed in 38 languages. Indeed, the trend appeared to be spreading abroad. In London, textile merchant Marcus Shloimovitz waged a four-year legal battle against the *Oxford English Dictionary*, only to be denied victory by the High Court in June 1973. Shloimovitz argued that the dictionary's secondary definition of a Jew as "a grasping or extortionate money lender or usurer, or a trader who drives hard bargains or deals craftily" maligned his race.

Humorist Arthur Hoppe, faced with the unfathomable metaphysics of the new tribal sensitivity, produced a column "Who Asked You, Mirror?" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 June 1973) in which he suggested that efforts to eliminate all remaining vestiges of racism, sexism, and poking fun at the handicapped, might begin with a radical revision of the nation's school textbooks, starting with a new volume of classic fairy tales headed up by "Coal Black and the Seven United Mine Workers."

The new sensitivity did not stop at ethnic and racial consciousness. Undaunted by the competition, the "Little People of America," meeting in convention at Oakland, California, protested at the usual description of them as "midgets." As their President explained: "That's a P. T. Barnum word" (*New York Times*, 26 July 1973.)

[12] Though Irving Kristol, in his *On The Democratic Idea in America* (1973), p.65, pointed drily to the plight of the numerous ethnic Americans who seemed to want to have their cake and eat it too. "I am myself a Jew and an American", Kristol wrote, "and with all due respect to the Deity, I think the odds are prohibitive that He would have gone out of His way to choose me twice over."

[13] The books referred to are Peter Schrag, *The Decline of the WASP* (1971), and Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* (1973).

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story "Harrison Bergeron." The story is set in the year 2018 when Americans all come under the unceasing vigilance of the United States Handicapper-General. Under his aegis the intelligent are kept from sustained thought by radios implanted in their heads; the strong and quick are slowed down by bags of birdshot, so that (as Vonnegut concludes) "Everybody was finally equal. . . . They weren't only equal before God and law. They were equal every which way."

IN PERSPECTIVE, the New Tribalism owed as much to a generalised yearning for spiritual meaning in a complex technological society as it did to the ethnic example.

As Maurice Cranston has observed,[14] the appeal to impressionable young minds of New Left attacks upon the ideals of the open society owes perhaps more to their emotional assurance of a sense of belonging in a Godless age than to any sustained rational coherence in their arguments. One is otherwise hard-pressed to explain the appeal to intelligent youth of such later productions of their ageing guru Herbert Marcuse as his "An Essay On Liberation", which sees the solidarity of the oppressed minorities of the new status politics as the key to achieving "Not regression to a previous stage of civilisation, but return to an imaginary *temps perdu* in the real life of mankind. . . ."[15]

A similar air of nostalgia in the guise of futurism informs the argument of another counter-culture coryphaeus, Theodore Roszak, whose vision of a recrudescent tribalism illumines the pages of his most recent book. "We can see the post-industrial alternative emerging in a thousand fragile experiments throughout America and Western Europe on the part of the young and the no longer young", he avers:

> ". . . communes rural and urban; voluntary primitivism; organic homesteading; extended families; *free schools; free clinics; handicraft* co-operatives; community development co-ops; Gandhian ashrams; neighborhood rap centers; labor gift exchanges. . . ."[16]

SMALL WONDER, THEN, with such atavistic profundities in the air, that my mind had turned to the new tribalism as I read Dee Brown's revisionist account of the 19th-century Indian Wars and reflected on its tremendous popular success. The special plight of the "Native American" had of course always evoked nostalgic memories of simpler times in a land of immigrants alternatively full of outward hubris and preoccupied with introspective self-analysis. For the lost past of the noble primitive, the first authentic American, was reassurance to the romantic mind of the one-time meeting in concrete cultural fact of two historic forces—the latter-day American's perennial yearning for the openness of the frontier and the psychological security of an assured and integrated sense of ethnic, racial and national autonomy. The times called for sympathetic imagination. AIM's bold initiative at Wounded Knee proclaimed the advent of the "new Indian Wars." The mind was seduced by intriguing historical parallels. Could it be that history was repeating itself, righting a terrible past wrong in favour of the superior claims of the tribal view of life? Or did the new ethnicity, tribal politics, and events surrounding the Second Battle of Wounded Knee point to the wisdom of Santayana's aside that those who do not learn from their history are doomed to relive it?

As my flight approached the Seattle-Tacoma Airport my thoughts turned from these stark

[14] Maurice Cranston (ed.), *The New Left: Six Critical Essays* (1970), p. 13.
[15] Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay On Liberation* (1969), p. 92. On the religious theme in Marcuse and the New Left, see R. N. Berki, "Marcuse and the Crisis of the New Radicalism: From Politics to Religion?" *Journal of Politics* (February 1972), pp. 56–93.
[16] "Why Tribe?" in Theodore Roszak, *Where the Wasteland Ends* (1972), pp. 422–423.

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alternatives to Marx's sardonic comment in the *Eighteenth Brumaire* that great historical facts occur twice, the first time as tragedy and the second as farce.

(A second article on the "new Indian War" at Wounded Knee will be published next month.)

A Cautionary Tale in Winter

On the fields of featureless snow
The children in their tugged-down hats
Are weaving a wicked escape.
They break out pillows from the drift,
Muddy and tangle the smoothed sheet
And kick at the dark cake beneath.

They will break pieces of iced roof
In their numb gloves for tea and chant
At the chimney witch who hates wet.
They will not come back indoors now.

Sunk in his hollow Christmas hood
The spectre of the spinney waits,
Captor of voiceless boys and girls.
The spectre's hands are antler horn,
His robe of burrs is pricked with blood.
Soon through the mist his sleigh comes up.

In harness heavy as tree-falls,
Twelve stags hung with clapperless bells
Tug him out on his hunt. Their eyes
Light the ground like a torch's beam.

The children separate and call
Out names, a quarry in panic.
They lose the yellow window lights,
Their voices become soft as snow.
Each dreams the slicing sleigh, the chill
Horn snatch and plunging icy ride,

The wavering eye-lights that mock
The lantern of their home, scratchy
Clutches of a spinney prison,
Unnumbered tongueless children.

Each wakes wide to the frowning moon
And skinny tap on the window-pane.
Each flounders in the soundless snow
Of sheets and pillows, voiceless cries
At the thump of the winter witch
Slithering wickedly from the roof.

Patrick Hare

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Peter Porter

The Feast of the Gods

In the perfect weather of their soft plateau
The reasonable deities deployed
Their human hungers. What was there more to show
To creatures who never had enjoyed
Freedom from death, but paying with their lives
Bought golden faces, a marble of archives?

It was a pleasure to imagine pain,
The circumstance of love, the stars far out
Which touched them little, and to feel again
That classic innocence when any doubt
Brought wonder to their finished universe,
The tessitura of man's dying curse.

One laid a hand upon his consort's flank
And felt by proxy every warming glance;
Birds of paradise and peacocks shrank
Into the polished fernery; the midday dance
Of animals to please their masters took
A warlike gesture from an open book.

The painter found them at post-prandial games,
Helmets worked askew and breasts exposed,
But having second sight he fed the flames
Of war which lay behind their lovers' pose:
Those long marches were not to any bed
But to the Plains of Fear, the Isle of the Dead.

Not to be moved by misery, not to know
Relish in loving, discontent in age—
Their thoughts were crystalline in sun or snow,
Their history atoms on rampage;
In place of good and bad they had fortune,
An aspect of the clouds and sliding moon.

You see this scene only when very old,
A vision of the unremitting gods
Picnicking as in the Age of Gold,
Not adding to or taking from the odds
But having eternity to live through
Looking beyond the face of death at you.

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Gavin Ewart

William Wordsworth (1770-1850)

Most modern Nature Lovers have a personal scale of values that tells them
what each tree, hill or bird's worth;
but this doesn't quite apply to Wordsworth.
For Wordsworth, as it were, believing was much the same as seeing—
he thought natural phenomena were the guardians of his heart and
soul of all his moral being.
The meadows and the woods and mountains kept him on the
straight and narrow
when he felt like getting pissed in places like Applethwaite or Yarrow.
If he had an urge to go out on a thrash
he would have to ask permission from a mountain ash.
Nature was a kind of ever-present Nurse
supervising all his life and all his verse.

The only time the system broke down seems to have been in France
when he was young and revolutionary, and every advance
in progressive thought was welcome. He wasn't the star of any
leading lady's salon,
but he succeeded completely in seducing a girl called Annette Vallon.
Though she became pregnant and had a B-A-B-Y
William by then had wandered off, lonely as a cloud in a
Lake District sky.
It all sounds very natural—but Nanny wasn't pleased;
there is absolutely no doubt at all that William was seized
by a fit of remorse and secrecy. From then on
no man was a brother
and he never again fancied republicanism or a bit of the other.

This, at any rate, is what they say. They say too that mountains for him
were father-figures
and wonderful things in his eyes, as wonderful as Tiggers.
But a more interesting question is *How did it come about?*
This wasn't exactly the first time that William had been allowed out.
It sounds to me like a failure in communication, a misunderstanding.
Perhaps French trees, like the French, were too logical and
not used to handing
out advice and instructions for people's love life or guidance
on what to do next, like the Athenes, Zeuses and Poseidons
who made Odysseus' life so difficult? Was William *en rapport*
with the French meadows, woods, etc? Or did they say
"*Tu as tort!*"
when he told them they ought to be guardians of his moral being,
and chuckle in a Gallic way? or just start *oui, oui* ing?
I think he would have avoided all that guilt and loss if he
had managed to give himself a less ridiculous philosophy.

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Column

IT WAS INEVITABLE that the bombing in Birmingham should have led to renewed demands for the restoration of the death penalty in cases of political terrorism, and no doubt such demands will be freely expressed in the debate on the death penalty which is to take place in the House of Commons. Such a reaction is natural and instinctive and may even have some degree of justification. The bombing has both frightened and angered people; and when fear and anger go hand in hand in hand they form an explosive combination of feelings which demand some form of release which is approved by public opinion and the law; otherwise it is possible that people may be tempted to apply some kind of rough justice of their own.

Indeed, that may form a part of the curious complex of motives which inspire the terrorists. The bombings are so wantonly and cruelly destructive, and seem so well designed to destroy any kind of sympathy the terrorists may enjoy outside their own ranks, that people sometimes wonder what rational purpose they can possibly have. Sometimes they seem like the unmotivated acts of madmen who kill simply for the sake of killing, and having destroyed or mutilated their victims go happily home to bed.

And yet the motives of the terrorists are not really difficult to understand. They wish, both in Northern Ireland and in Britain, to sicken and appal people with the consequences of British policy in Ulster—and to such an extent that they will wish to wash their hands of the problem altogether, withdraw their troops from the province, even at the risk of civil war, and allow the people of Ulster to settle their own fate, even though this may take the form of cutting each other's throats.

Apart from this strategy, the IRA wish to convince people that the problem of Ulster is such an intractable one that there is really no rational solution to it. At the same time, they wish to create in people's minds such a state of confusion, alarm and bewilderment that, even against their own wishes and instincts they will resort to acts and policies which can only succeed in intensifying and escalating the conflict and making it more insoluble than ever. They have something of the spirit of the abominable Pyotr Verkhovensky in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed*, who hoped by a series of apparently pointless crimes and scandals so to horrify and bewilder people that finally public order would break down altogether, and so create the opportunity for himself and his followers to seize power. The object of terrorism is to create terror, because terrified people are no longer capable of rational action and are therefore reduced to a condition in which they have no choice except to surrender themselves into the hands of the terrorists.

IN ALL THIS, OF COURSE, the IRA are following principles which by now are common to terrorist groups throughout the world and have been applied with an astonishing degree of success. As Mr Paul Johnson points out in an admirable article in the *New Statesman*, it is by now taken for granted that established governments should bargain and negotiate with terrorist organisations on their own terms, should yield to their demands, enter into what are in effect treaties with them and thereby confer on terrorism a kind of legitimacy which is a reflection of their own weakness and indecision. The latest and greatest triumph of terrorism is of course the recognition accorded by the United Nations to the Palestine Liberation Organisation and to its leader, Arafat. After so notable a victory, no one should be surprised if at some later but not too distant date the United Nations should recognise the IRA as the accredited representatives of the people of Ulster; and there would be just as much and just as little justification in the one case as in the other. Terrorism alone has won Arafat recognition, and it is by terrorism that the IRA hopes one day to achieve an equal status.

IF SUCH AN ACCOUNT of the tactics and strategy of terrorism is correct, we should be well advised to realise the dangers inherent in the demand for the restoration of the death penalty in cases of political crimes. The arguments which, after many years of debate and discussion, finally persuaded the great majority of the people of this country, and of all parties in the House of Commons, to abolish the death penalty are of a kind which do not logically permit any distinction between one form of murder and another. Nor is there any reason to believe that the death penalty would prove a more effective deterrent in the case of political crimes than in any other. To react to terrorism by the restoration of the death penalty would be to resort to its own methods and weapons; and however successful these may be in the hands of terrorists they are not ones which are adapted to the purposes of any government which claims to be civilised. *Blut ist ein ganz besonderer Saft*, said Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust; Blood is a very peculiar juice*, and it has a very

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peculiar effect on those who drink it. In this country, particularly, the restoration of the death penalty would be likely to result in political divisions of which the IRA would be the only beneficiary. No doubt it would help to relieve the justifiably outraged feelings of people in this country; but it is not normally thought morally justifiable to relieve one's feelings by killing a man.

There are, however, other and particular reasons for believing that the death penalty is inappropriate to the crimes of the IRA. There is nothing like the blood of the martyrs for cementing the bonds of a subversive organisation, nothing more apt to give a spurious nobility to even the most despicable cause, nothing that lives longer in people's memories or so hardens their minds and hearts against any form of compromise or concession, nothing, to the true believer, that affords so much justification for thinking the worse the better course; and no political association has ever profited more by it than the IRA. In *The Times* recently Mr Bernard Levin found the space to quote, *in toto*, as an example of the emotional appeal of Irish martyrdom, that touching song, *The Patriot Game*, with which Dominic Behan used to entertain many a saloon bar and perhaps win English hearts for the Irish cause. In the *Sunday Telegraph* Mr John Grigg quoted from Yeats's magnificent poem, *Easter 1916*, to show how the death of martyrs affected even one who normally regarded the politics of the market place with disdain.

Yeats knew as well as anyone that the Easter Rebellion of 1916 was an act of political folly which did nothing to advance the cause of Irish freedom and in no way commanded the support of the Irish people. But he knew also that the drum-head execution of its leaders was an even greater act of folly and would help to achieve precisely what the Rebellion had failed to do. Most of all he knew that for many Irishmen it would put an end to any rational discussion of the problem of Ireland and open a gulf between England and Ireland that could never again be bridged. In his poem, "Sixteen Dead Men," he wrote:

O but we talked at large before
The sixteen men were shot,
But who can talk of give and take,
What should be and what not
While those dead men are loitering there
To stir the boiling pot?

You say that we should still the land
Till Germany's overcome;
But who is there to argue that
Now Pearse is deaf and dumb?
And is their logic to outweigh
MacDonagh's bony thumb?

How could you dream they'd listen
Who have an ear alone
For those new comrades they have found,
Lord Edward and Wolfe Tone,
Or meddle with our give and take
That converse bone to bone?

We have been talking at large now in Ulster for over five years, with little success, yet to continue to do so provides the only hope, however frail, of arriving at any agreed settlement. But even that hope would be destroyed if to all those who have fallen in the cause of Irish freedom there were now to be added Irishmen executed under a British law which made of them an exceptional case subject to a punishment from which all others are exempt, whatever their crimes. The Minister, Mr Merlyn Rees, might give and take, barter and negotiate, for ever, but at every turn of the argument MacDonagh's bony thumb would outweigh reason and the ghosts of the dead would rise to bar the way to any compromise or concession and yet another page be added to that record of crime, bloodshed and murder which is the history of Anglo-Irish relations.

Indeed, there is good reason that it might add new horrors to the familiar ones of the past. The tactics of terrorism are by now so well-developed and well-defined that they provide a reliable guide to what we might expect under such circumstances: the enlistment of women and minors who might be expected to escape the extreme penalty; kidnapping; hi-jacking; the taking and, where thought expedient, the execution of hostages. Such tactics are already a commonplace in many areas of the world, and no government has yet found effective means of defeating them. It would be surprising indeed if the IRA did not resort to them if the death penalty were to be restored for political crimes.

★

THE LATE R. C. ZAEHNER, who died suddenly last month at the age of sixty-one, was known to readers of ENCOUNTER, if not by his other works, by the remarkable article, "The Wickedness of Evil", which he contributed to the April 1974 issue and which stimulated so much controversial correspondence in the ensuing numbers. He was one of my oldest friends and boon companions, and I feel sad that I shall never again sit up drinking with him all night until dawn reminded us that there was such a thing as bed. My wife dreaded such occasions, as they were apt to incapacitate me for thought or action for the next twenty-four hours, but on Professor Zaehner they had little or no effect and after a few hours sleep he would reappear, if not exactly

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fresh as a daisy, at least ready for a substantial breakfast and a hard day's work.

He was immensely learned and a remarkable linguist. I had evidence of this when he came to stay with me in Wales and within a few days, among many other preoccupations, had acquired an adequate working knowledge of my native language, which most people find very difficult. When I expressed surprise, he explained that when one knew ten or twelve languages, it was not difficult to acquire another one, because the principles of linguistics are everywhere the same.

But beyond all this he was one of the oddest and most original human beings I have ever known. In his youth the lusts of the flesh had made him profoundly unhappy, because they inspired him with passions of an intensity which others found it difficult to reciprocate. Maurice Bowra commemorated his amorous fantasies in some affectionate and scurrilous verses:

Mickey Rooney, Mickey Rooney
(O the pleasant sight to see!)
In the dark, at the Electra,
Sits on Doctor Zaehner's knee.

From such afflictions he was delivered by his conversion to Roman Catholicism, which, if it did not exactly bring him happiness, brought him a kind of rest from torment, and satisfied those instincts in him which directed his mind to the study of religion, in particular Zoroastrianism and Zen Buddhism, and led him to the chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford. It was his great gift that in him religious feeling was combined with a powerful and logical mind and that he could translate his ideas on subjects which to most of us are profoundly alien and esoteric into lucid and direct English. His book on Zoroastrianism, *Zurván*, is a masterpiece of scholarship; and his *Mysticism, Sacred and Profane* is remarkable for its combination of learning and originality.

His religious feelings, and his insight into the religious feelings of others, were related, I think, to a genuine childishness in his character, which sometimes almost amounted to infantilism, and made him happiest in the company of other children. He was very fond of my twin sons when they were very small, and when he came to stay in Wales would saunter into the town with them to buy sherbet, ice-cream and lollipops, which all three devoured with equal avidity and pleasure. But he was not only religious; he was superstitious. My house in Wales was haunted, and once, at midnight, I found the Professor screaming his head off in the drawing-room because he had met the ghost on the stairs.

Perhaps his childishness was, in turn, related to his diminutive stature. During the War he belonged to that notable band of Oxford scholars who were known as the Seven Dwarfs and were recruited by the Intelligence Corps in the hope of finding among them a World War II successor to another Oxford gnome of genius, Lawrence of Arabia. Zaehner, however, had a more serious physical handicap, in that he suffered from −13 eyesight, and wore spectacles as thick as pebbles, without which he was blinder than any bat. This made things difficult for him in the army. He confessed to me that all soldiers looked like a khaki blur to him and he found it impossible to distinguish their rank. His practice was to salute any khaki object in sight, and after he was commissioned many a private soldier was astonished to find himself smartly saluted as the minute figure of Lieutenant Zaehner approached.

The army, however, was able to find a use for his talents by sending him to Persia, where he served with great distinction, together with an equally brilliant and eccentric officer, Adrian Bishop. I have often wondered what the Persians made of them, and what strange ideas about England they may have derived from them; they were certainly two of the oddest British officers who ever served the Raj abroad.

In later life, Zaehner became, if anything, even more eccentric. He believed that in the mass-murderer Charles Manson he had discovered a religious genius and reincarnation of *The Savage God* to whom his last book is devoted; and in the hippy American students of the University of California a prelapsarian race with all the virtues which Man possessed before the Fall. "Angels!" he would say dreamily, "Angels!"

With such fantasies he combined a more mundane interest in drink, where it was strength and quantity rather than quality which were important to him, and in food. He was both a *gourmet* and a *gourmand*, and in vacation liked to make little gastronomic trips through France, which carried him, alone and by train, from one famous restaurant to another, eating, at vast expense, two immense and delicious meals a day which only a digestive system of iron could have accommodated.

Such random memories are a poor tribute to one whom I admired immensely as a scholar and valued deeply as a friend. But fond as I was of him, I am rather glad I was not with him on a recent occasion when he very nearly succeeded in burning All Souls to the ground. Perhaps it was fire-worship, but more likely a forgotten cigarette end. In spite of such hazards, however, All Souls and Oxford will be poorer places without him, and I doubt if the chair of Eastern Religions and Ethics will ever have a more learned or a more distinguished occupant. *R*

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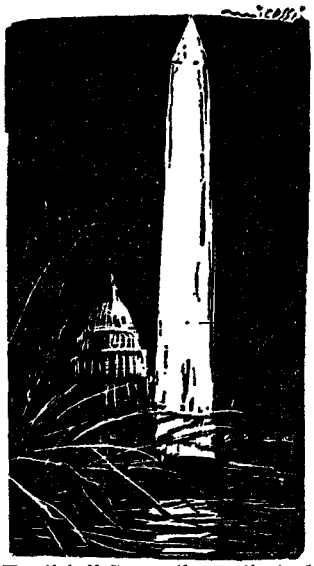
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

A Symposium

Aspects of Amerenglish (II)

Kingsley Amis:



MR BALL'S readable and entertaining article starts to go wrong near the start with his assertion that "English-English and American-English remain distinct languages." It is first of all unclear whether "English-English" is designed to exclude Scotch-English and Welsh-English (if it is, then shame), or whether it does sloppy duty for "British-English." Secondly, to limit the discussion to just two Englishes is unfair to Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia, New Zealand, Ireland, the anglophone Caribbean in its diversity, and, above all and perhaps surprisingly, Australia, Mr Ball's homeland, not to mention uncountable other, smaller speech-communities. And what about "remain"? Since when? 1620? 1783? And lastly, of course, English-English, American-English, and any-native-speaker's-English are not distinct languages but variants of a single language, variants much more closely related to one another than the dialects of at least three Continental languages. Mr Ball goes from one misunderstanding to another when he leaves it to philologists to explain "why the language split so distinctly into two separate streams." Anyone with access to a history primer is well equipped to explain the situation he misrepresents.

He inspires something a long way from confidence with his teeming inaccuracies. To take no more than what he all too rightly describes as his "piece of nonsense"—a "bespoke" suit is an archaic suit, long replaced by the made-to-measure suit which his American friend would surely have recognised even if the expression was quite new to her. Who wears medals (all I can make of "gongs") on a civilian suit?—unless he's going to a special sort of formal occasion, which is very unlikely in the context. You don't "carry" a biro, not in England at least: you "have it on" you. "Trouble locally in the mains", given the context, means as little to me as it might to any American. And a blower is, or was, a telephone only in the phrase "on the blower."

But the most fundamental of Mr Ball's mistakes is his evident belief that the existence of local variants within English is somehow undesirable or even grave. Genuine linguistic misunderstandings between, for instance, English people and Americans are almost as rare as any sort of genuine misunderstanding. We all have our comic horror-stories of such: my favourite concerns the Englishman who, told by his American hostess that she was going to wash up, asked in front of her husband if he might help her. (Philip French was the victim.) But for chrissake—that's "Christ's sake" in American, chaps—has anybody ever gone away from a shop —meaning "store", youse guys—empty-handed through ignorance of some one of these local variants? If I were fool enough to demand a "vest" in the United States when I wanted an undergarment, and saw the man bringing me what I call a waistcoat, I could still get what I wanted by a very short and simple explanation in our shared language. "I'm sorry, I meant something else" and "I'm afraid I don't understand" are handy starting-points, unambiguous wherever English is spoken.

A popular way of resolving difficulties with the written word is, as Mr Ball acknowledges, in England to ask an American, and in America to ask an Englishman. I know of no book on the subject that is anywhere near complete or accurate. Mr Ball falls into the trap of quoting from one he recommends:

> an American says, "I'd *better* leave now"; and the Englishman says, "I'd *best* leave now."

Nonsense; and even if it weren't, what of it?

Patrick Cosgrave:

LIKE MYSELF, that great 19th-century Tory Lord Shaftesbury liked Americans and suspected America. "I look to the United States in great apprehension", he wrote in 1853. "Her

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mission, certainly her desire, seems to be conquest, bloodshed, and, strange to say, expansion." Again, in 1856, Shaftesbury recorded, "America is to me the most embarassing contemplation that time, past or present, brings before me. It baffles my judgments, disturbs my faith, and leaves me at a nonplus as to the character of right and wrong, of wisdom and folly, in the conduct of men and nations."

Thus a strange preface to a few random remarks about "Amerenglish" by my Australian-born colleague, Ian Ball, in a recent ENCOUNTER. Ball finds a certain usefulness in the pithier phrases and words of English as she is used by the Americans—certainly he finds a usefulness in short words and phrases which encapsulate certain modern phenomena, if one wants them encapsulated. And he finds that usefulness even though he is to some extent worried about the alteration—never let the word corruption pass my lips—the American colonies have wrought in our language.

But the Americans, and the American use of the language, are irrelevant to the problem of English. Their existence and their habits of speech baffle judgment, disturb faith and leave us uncertain as to the character of right and wrong. In other words, any discussion of Amerenglish (as, in France, any discussion of *Franglais*) attracts the mind away from the shameful abuse of meaning which increasingly marks the use of the language in this island. Let the Americans—and the Australians, and the Canadians, and the Hondurans, and all other adapters of the English language—do what they will: the problem is the abuse we ourselves inflict on the tongue. Let me give a few examples, in catalogue form.

The use of *disinterested* for *uninterested*. The use of detract for attract away from (see the above paragraph). The use of decimate to mean reduce radically, as opposed to reduce by a tenth. The use of contemptuous where contemptible is meant (as witness an election speech by E. Heath). The use of irony to mean satire. Above all, perhaps, the abuse of the words hopeful and hopefully. I have—on tape, I fear, so watch out, BBC—the words of a young reporter on the *Today* programme who was describing the efforts of a rescue team to burrow through to a group of trapped miners. "Hopefully", he says, "they will reach the hopeful hole by midday." I—as they used to say—ask you.

I have catalogued some instances of using words to mean something they do not. Of course this is only a part of a wider problem—the abuse of words and the abuse of emphasis to convey feeling, particularly by television and radio reporters (I almost said commentators, and should have said commenters). This has been roundly attacked by Mr Bernard Levin, who was defending *the* (as opposed to *thee*) correct pronunciation of the definite article. But it is all part of the thing we must fight against.

Now, I freely confess myself to be a curmudgeon. Much though I admire him, I expect, had I been living at the time, that I would have regarded Dr Johnson's dictionary as a dangerous innovation. The curmudgeonly view looks, today, like a sensible policy—who are we, with all our petty inadequacies, to tamper with the language before we have explored its past richness?

KINGSLEY AMIS's *most recent novel is "Ending Up" (Jonathan Cape)*. . . .

PATRICK COSGRAVE *is Features Editor of the "Daily Telegraph" Colour Magazine and Political Correspondent of "The Spectator"*. . . .

LEO ROSTEN *is a frequent visitor to London from New York; his works include the Hyman Kaplan books (by "Leonard Q. Ross"), and "The Joys of Yiddish" (W. H. Allen)*. . . .

Leo Rosten:

AN ORCHID to Ian M. Ball for "Amerenglish." But I am as puzzled by Mr Ball's assertion that "gods" is "unknown in the U.S." as I was by an advertisement I read in London last spring: *"Bull's Pizzle Whips, £10, at Steeple Bumpstead."*

Mr Ball asks, rather plaintively, why Americans say "boo-boo" instead of "boob." They (and the English) certainly should. A "boob" is gormless, a fool, a lunkhead, a Simple Simon "in spades." A "boo-boo" neither breathes nor bumbles; it is a *faux-pas*, a "boner", a malaprop.*

A few unmentioned differences deserve attention. Americans "take a vacation"; Britons "go on holiday." English phones are "engaged" (to whom this pre-marital state refers I cannot imagine—unless the Royal Post Office produces both male and female telephones) where American phones are "busy." The English ask one to "Ring me" where the Americans say "Call me."

* And yet, and yet. According to the *Daily Mail* (London, 15 October 1974):

". . . The jet-set life of blonde model Patricia Page ran rapidly downhill.

'. . . I was going to work as a Bunny Girl croupier but I have no boobs.'

'You have no what?' asked 60-year-old Mr Justice Caulfield: 'No breasts,' explained Mrs Page's counsel, Mr Brian Galpin.

'Oh!' said the judge. . . ."

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The English go "to hospital"; Americans mosey along to "the hospital." A London doctor of "med'sin" works in his "surgery"; an American M.D. prescribes "med-i-cine" in his "office." And when Albion's heirs refer to "the loo" Americans must be on their bi-lingual toes to realise that what is meant is "the John."

I know of no people who say as much without accompanying facial expressions or (horrors!) physical gestures as the English do. Intonation, inflection and the cadence of sentences convey social stratification in a way American speech cannot equal. Oxbridgians strangle their vowels in the dungeons of the nose, and stress the opening words of a statement, starting at the higher notes and sliding down to the lower, thusly: "*Do* you think him honest?" Americans reverse the harmonics: "Do you think him *honest*?"

Permit me to add (to Messrs Bull and Schur's catalogue of Anglo-Americanisms) certain singularities of pronunciation:

AMERICAN	ENGLISH
been ("bin")	bean
bore	baw
perhaps	praps
How do you do?	Hojado?
are	ah
again	a gain
sure	shaw
strangers	strain jaws
nonsense	rubbish
Aunty ("Anty")	On-tee
your	yawr
cheaper	cheepah
those of you	thozeview
frústrated	frustráted
more	maw
surely	shorely
privacy ("pryvacy")	prihvacy
issue ("ishoo")	iss-you
extraordinary	strawdnry
Thank you	Queue (or Kyaw)

The first time an English maid asked me "what time do you wish to be knocked up?" I felt it my duty to inform her that American men are not capable of becoming pregnant. The first time I asked a London waitress for "French fried potatoes" she flinched: "I *don't* think Cook knows how to prepare them." I nodded towards the next table: "The cook has already done so." She blinked, eyed me as if I was one of those jokers from "the States" she had been warned against, and soon brought me my steak and "chips." If you ask for "chips" in New York you might get the plastic tokens used in poker, or a mound of fragments from a saw-mill.

I am always impressed by the precision, and delighted by the felicity, with which English men and women use our common language.

My wife, phoning Chicago from London, asked, "Is this the overseas operator?" A pitying male voice replied, "This is *one* of them, madam."

On Savile Row, an American studied himself in the mirror and remarked, "Isn't the jacket too large?" The proprietor cleared his throat. "If you will but permit the garment to assume its natural aplomb. . . ."

Such elegant exactitude sometimes founders, of course. In one London park this notice warned pedestrians:

ANY PERSON NOT PUTTING LITTER INTO THIS BASKET WILL BE LIABLE TO A FINE OF £5.

To this, the pluperfect H. W. Fowler railed: "Those who have no litter to put into the basket must, it seems, rush away to find some."

Finally, I was spellbound by a sign I saw at a bank window (on Oxford Street, yet):

SERVICE SUSPENDED WHILST CASHIER IS ENGAGED ON ANCILLARY TILL ENTRIES.

Hot damn! In Biloxi (Miss.) or Sodom (N.Y.) or Humbug Point (Oregon), that sign would read:

CLOSED

Clive James:

I DON'T THINK Ian Ball has uncovered many points that aren't already treated fairly thoroughly in the various editions of Mencken's monumental *The American Language*, but I suppose the subject is perennial. For my own part, I like American slang and am always pinching it. It is necessary, however, to pinch accurately. I once used "psyche out" for "suss out"—actually it means "defeat by Gamesmanship." I haven't yet used "sidewalk" for "footpath", but have been heavily tempted to use "highway" for "motorway."

One shouldn't steal an American word without stealing all the other words that go with it, for as long as the caper lasts: *i.e.*, when writing about cars don't use "hood" for "bonnet" unless you use "top" for "hood." I was amused to find David O. Selznick, in his collected memos, using "not alone" for "not only." I have since found

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that this is not an illiteracy but good American usage. In an essay I wrote on Edmund Wilson I used the word "boondoggle", for which we have no equivalent. My publishers insisted on hyphenating it, for no ascertainable reason. It is interesting that the writers who churn out schlock TV series like *The Pathfinders* not only absorb current American showbiz usages but transfer them to the past, so that you hear wartime RAF types solemnly asking "You know something?" and pronouncing themselves to be in "deep trouble." Hideous and shameful.

This danger lies in wait for all of us who decline to keep our language pure. But who wants to stay pure? There is always a case for rejecting American slang, but American *jargon—i.e.*, terminology, arising out of a specific occupation—is often too attractive to resist. The aerospace and automotive engineering vocabularies, in particular, are much more interesting there than here. I was brought up in Sydney, where we devoured both British and American comics in school. The two cultures have always been scrambled in my head and I don't see why I shouldn't go on scrambling them, so long as it can be done consciously. But if I noticed myself (or worse, didn't notice myself) putting British words in the mouth of an American character, or vice versa, I'd be in, er, deep trouble.

William F. Buckley, Jr.:

YOUR AMUSING, and extravagantly comprehensive, essay on the differences between English-English and American-English fails, I fear, to do much more than document what we all know. I mean by that not that all of us knew the two forms in every given case ("pantechnichon" indeed! No wonder the lorry driver who came on was "articulated"); but that no one was surprised that, often, there are two forms. Even so, I think the problems are neither (*a*) practical: Really, no American I can think of, lying on a British operating table, would balk at the prospect of "lint" being applied to his open wound, unless he had reason to suspect that the medication in question was an exclusive creation of the Minister of Health. And the Englishman in New York innocently expressing a desire to stroke his hostess's pussy would surely not be misunderstood, always assuming the reasonably conspicuous presence of a cat. Nor (*b*), literary. Perhaps there is an idiomatic literature being published in England the force of which I miss by reason of my ignorance of, or inattention to, the divergencies Mr Ball is worried about. But I am serene about it, even as I read American works of great verbal inventiveness, not to say licentiousness.

These, however, more often propel me to the serene conviction that, well before the bondsman requites his mortal toil, the neologism will have reduced to a metabolically reasonable level of assimilation, rather than that weightless alienation that so frightens Mr Ball, moving him to encourage the production of more glossaries. I hope these materialise; but mostly because, as a free-market enthusiast, I believe there ought to be a market for philology. I fear, besides, that the alternative is that typical patrons of philology will turn their energies elsewhere, in which case they would do more harm to society than vernacularists are likely to do to language.

Although, as I say, these patrons are unlikely to get into trouble while visiting London or New York, philologists *can* keep them out of trouble by giving them glossaries and other diversions to wrestle with, occupying their time in intellectually energetic pursuits, and commensurately reducing the time available for devoting themselves to the dangerous business of seeking solutions for public problems.

CLIVE JAMES *is television critic of "The Observer"; his book of essays, "The Metropolitan Critic", was published in 1974 (Faber & Faber)....*

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY, JR. *is the editor of "National Review": His latest book is "United Nations Journal: A Delegate's Odyssey" (Putnam)....*

MAX LERNER *is Professor of American Civilisation at Brandeis University and a syndicated columnist for the "New York Post" and "Los Angeles Times"....*

PATRICK BROGAN *is the Washington correspondent of "The Times" (London).*

Max Lerner:

THERE IS A STORY about the American economist, Thorstein Veblen, when he was teaching at the University of Missouri. A zealous student buttonholed him after class, with a long question about some matter of current dispute. "I'm not bothered that way," Veblen said. I fear I am not as bothered as Ian Ball about the woes of Amerenglish. Most of the snags and pratfalls he cites seem to me picayune matters. The rest express differences of national character and experience which we would do well to study as

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such. In practical terms we all take our chances with them when we tread on each other's turf.

If I am less bothered than Ball about the Amerenglish vagaries I am more bothered than he seems to be about the stodginess of both languages in their growth. His examples, especially from technology, food, travel, anatomy, are from the frozen skeletal frame of language, not from its meaningful living flow. As an American I missed the sense one gets in Mencken's *American Language* of the effortless vitality of new speech in a wide diversity of functional groups. I should have welcomed a British view of how the differences in phrasing between the two languages show up the different character of their vitality and their modes of growth.

Sometimes these changes get expressed in the written language too, and Ball's reference to Norman Mailer may be an instance, although Vladimir Nabokov is something else again. Reading the Elizabethan playwrights and the 17th-century British divines one has a sense of awe at their linguistic creativeness. Compared with it the Americanisms and Britishisms we worry about today seem picayune. There is the smell of the newspaper style sheet about Ball's complaints and puzzlements which is very far from the bars, wharves, film and jive sessions, and campus hangouts, where the living language is created.

The jams we get into when we blunder into diverse transoceanic usages are amusing, and good enough for academic and journalistic shop talk. But if we get stuck in them it will be a sign that our people and writers have stopped growing. The Lord deliver us from that cul-de-sac, and the Lord send us more writers who have daring about words, as Shakespeare did, and Donne, and Joyce, and Sir Thomas Browne.

Patrick Brogan:

THE ESTATE AGENTS (realtors, from real estate) and the neighbours assured us that Lafayette Elementary School in North-west Washington was one of the best, if not the very best, in the District of Columbia. Two of my children now go there, and towards the end of last term, one of them brought back from school a letter asking whether we would like to send him to summer school.

Attached was a form for us to complete, if we were interested: "I want for my child to attend summer school for English," and "I want for my child to attend summer school for arithmetic." We decided against it.

The same school once sent us a notice that our daughter's class was going on a trip, at a cost of $1 and adding "no money will be excepted after Tuesday."

The School Superintendant for the District disapproves of the way tests are conducted. She observes that more black children than white fail them, and concludes that this is because the test tries to measure the child's acquired learning, instead of his "potential." She wants tests which black children can pass, not ones which show whether or not they can read, spell or do simple arithmetic.

Mr Edwin Newman, who has just written a book about it, believes that America will be the death of English. I think that he is probably right. A disregard for grammar is now so widespread in the United States, starting in the schools, that it is far too late to correct the situation. People are not seriously worried about it, they do not think it matters—and the English are joining in the destruction of the language.

Examples of grammatical horrors may be found in any newspaper in the English-speaking world and in most other publications. The word hopefully has probably been irreparably debased. The sentence "I will take my exams hopefully tomorrow" no longer means that the speaker hopes to pass but that he hopes to reach the examination room.

The destruction of that adverb began on this side of the Atlantic, but the English joined in without a moment's hesitation. The remaining differences of vocabulary (mad for angry, crazy for mad, sidewalk for pavement, and so on) are much less significant than the joint Anglo-American effort to destroy English.

Here are a few modern American verbs, most of which have already reached England: to *articulate* (meaning to say), to *relocate* (to move), to *perceive* (to see), to *upcome* ("the upcoming conference. . . ."), to *outstand* and to *insee* ("outstandingly insightful commentator, James Reston"), to *determine* (to decide), to *input*, to *craft* ("Ford's carefully crafted speech"), to *hone* (usually to hone keenly, applied to minds: "Mr Brown's keenly honed mind"—Evans & Novak, 16 October, to *imprint* (to print), to *impact* ("81 of our schools are heavily impacted", meaning affected), to *inoperate* ("my previous statements are inoperative"—Ron Ziegler), and to concertize ("Horowitz is the first pianist to concertize in the Met"—*N.Y. Times*, 15 October).

Adjectives: *violative* ("such conduct would be violative of my responsibility"—Mr Leon Jaworski, 12 October), *supportive* ("I cannot be supportive of the pardon"), *dismissive* ("Historically, the Conservative Party is much more brutally

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dismissive with leaders who disappoint its hopes of power than the Labour Party"—*The Times*, 14 October), *automotive* ("The automotive field offers some examples"—Mr Ian Ball, ENCOUNTER).

WHAT IS HAPPENING is that people forget the differences between verbs and adverbs, nouns and adjectives and, of course, often forget the most basic meaning of the word itself. What on earth can an "automotive field" be? A field with its own motives? Dismissive obviously derives from permissive, and soon we will read about the dismissive society in which Conservative leaders are brutalised.

Economic journalists are particularly inclined to misuse words. The word secular seems to have survived its use a few years ago as a synonym for protracted. They write instead that "The thrust of policy is predicated to contain the parameters of inflation at a viable level."

I am told that economists have just discovered *disintermediation*, which they believe means the removal of money from savings banks. *Interface* is still with us, and so is *exponential growth*.

Anyone who uses such words or phrases has obviously no sense of the English language and cannot be brought to understand the fact. In the same way President Pompidou wanted to put a motorway at the foot of Notre Dame, and could not understand why some people objected. The man who can describe himself as "supportive of that policy" will never write English. London University (which destroyed Bloomsbury) will never understand architecture and it is a waste of time arguing with them.

It is sometimes called "functional illiteracy", another meaningless phrase. It is, in fact, a sign of the badness of American and English education. It cannot be blamed on television. Most of the people I have quoted were educated before that monster entered the fray. Perhaps there was something to be said, after all, for a classical education and for the argument that a sound grounding in Latin grammar helped one cope with English grammar.

It is not a matter of pedantry. I do not, for instance, care very much where the word only goes in a sentence; and although I tend to use none, anybody, and somebody as singular nouns it does not offend me to see them used as plural nouns ("none of them were there"). There is one difference between the use of English here and in England, which goes back for generations, and may be a legitimate development of the language.

This is the omission of articles, prepositions and conjunctions. "Kay wrote me . . . Mayor Washington . . . One hundred three . . . he protested the statement . . . President Nixon said he would resign . . ." and so on all sound wrong in English, but these are usages which may prevail over normal English practice.

Misuse of prepositions and conjunctions, I hope, will not. "It's not surprising if I've been condemnatory of Protestant uncivil acts"—Arnold Wesker in the *Sunday Times* on 13 October—is horrible on several counts, including the pathetic attempt at originality in "uncivil acts." But the "if" is typical of grammatical sloppiness. "I'll try and see," is now universal in the spoken language, and is now spreading into print.

There is also a curious and long-term (secular?) development in American pronunciation. This is a tendency to pronounce French words, or words that might be French, with a heavy stress on the last syllable. It is not a recent occurrence, it is not a fashion (like thrust, or viable) which will disappear after a while. It may have started among people who imagined that this was the way the French did it.

That stage is now passed. People without the least claim to speaking French do it. Try saying out loud the following words with a heavy stress on the last syllable: *ballet*, *baton*, *beret*, *debris*, *chateau*, *gourmet*, or *cafe*. One of my children, who is bi-lingual, says ball-AY in American and *ballet* in French.

The AAA guide to New Orleans states that the *Vieux Carré* in that city should be pronounced "VEEyeu carRAY." French and other foreign proper names are pronounced in the same way: Millet becomes Mi-LAY, Schubert Shoo-BER, Peugeot, in a commercial, becomes Poo-JOWE, and some people speak of the Chicago Tri-BUNE. Oddest of all, Mohammed Ali becomes a-LEE.

This habit does, however, help Americans pronounce the names Degas and Descartes more nearly accurately than the English, who put a heavy stress on the first syllable.

AMERICANS HAVE AN EVEN better-deserved reputation for indifference to foreign languages than have the British. The *Washington Post*, for instance, never puts accents on foreign words which need them, because it has never bothered to equip itself with the necessary typeface. This does not deter it from using foreign words, which are therefore frequently spelt wrong, except by the food critic who insists on inking in the accents by hand.

People without alternative sources of information believe that the new Portuguese Prime Minister is called Goncalves, and on 12 October the *Post* had a big story under the heading "*Art Traditions Renewed: A Juried Show, a Salon des Refuses.*" The headline contains another of those strange verbs ("I was juried by the R.A. yester-

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day", perhaps) and this total and rather insulting indifference to the correct spelling of French words.

It is probably too much to hope that foreign languages will ever be well taught in a country which treats its native tongue so badly. Schools which cannot distinguish between *accept* and *except* are not going to worry about French pronunciation or spelling. They will go on to greater things. "I wrote ENCOUNTER Editor Lasky Monday" is now standard American although, by dropping superfluous words, it goes against the modern tendency to use meaningless circumlocution. Sociologists are the worst offenders and their writings are doubtless a reflection of their thought-processes. "Too, we can make a judgemental response in a reasonably instantaneous time-frame to whomever may articulate the perception that the capacity to generate language viability destruction has reached exponential take off at this moment of time."

Just wait till the television generation takes over.

Fording the river

Sunday afternoon and the water
Black among the stones, the forest
Ash-grey in its permanent dusk
Of quivering pine. That day
You unexpectedly crossed the river.

It was cold and you quickly shouted
As your feet felt the white stones
Knocking together. I had bent
To examine a strand of barbed wire
Looping from a buried fence

When I heard you shout. And
There you were. On the other side,
Running away, and I felt
You had gone forever
In a small puncture of anticipation.

Gone. Although you were already
Coming back. I picked up
Your shoes with a sense that years
Had suddenly decided to pass.
I remembered your riddle

On the way up here. "Brother or sister
I have none, but that man's father
Is my father's son. Who am I
Talking about?" About my son,
Who crossed cold Lethe, thought it Rubicon.

Seamus Deane

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Old Furniture & "Nouvelle Critique"

By George Watson

THE LITERARY world is now in a period of brief cult—brief but, in all probability, intense—of the French New Criticism. Its name has gone forth. Within the next five years most students of literature will have heard something of its doctrines and procedures; and within the next ten years, if similar cults like Northrop Frye or Marshall McLuhan are anything to go by, they will have forgotten them. As a bystander, I could wish both periods shorter. *La nouvelle critique* seems to me silly stuff, and as cults go this one does not promise well. But the symptoms are there, and one must accept that it will happen. It would be foolish not to make due preparation —as foolish as to panic or to surrender.

The history of Western criticism might be seen as the continuing swing of a pendulum, with the swings growing ever wider and more rapid. The pendulum moves between the mimetic and the formalist: Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Poetics* illustrate, though in no tidy way, the earliest recorded swing from one to the other. A work of art can be seen as a mimesis: as describing, or at least (as Plato supposed) as having a duty to describe, things as they are or should be, and as succeeding or failing in these terms; and this view often involves a moral demand upon literature. Alternatively, and as a polar opposite, literature can be seen in formal terms, an autonomy of pure design, a well-wrought urn. For more than two thousand years the critical mind has moved between these extremities, seeking to emphasise mimesis at the expense of autonomy, or vice versa, or struggling in various ways to reconcile them. Today, in a world where the fictions of Beckett, Nabokov and Borges are fashionable, autonomy is plainly in the ascendant. So it was, as anyone can remember, in the heyday of the American New Criticism, in the 1940s and 1950s, in the days when (or so it used to be said) a poem must not Mean but Be; and so, since the mid-1960s, with intriguing differences and a change of address from Yale to Paris, it is yet again. The pendulum now takes less than a generation to travel its course.

Those whose early literary studies led them to Winnie-the-Pooh will recognise the contrast I am drawing here without difficulty. Pooh's song, which he composed for walking in snow, runs:

> *. . . And nobody*
> *Knows—tiddely-pom,*
> *How cold my*
> *Toes—tiddely-pom*
> *Are*
> *Growing.*

"It isn't the *toes*," remarks Piglet, who is a simple-minded mimeticist, "so much as the ears." I take it that Pooh, who only put the "poms" in at all to make his song hummier, is a much purer formalist than Aristotle, who was eager to agree that poems exist in some sort of relationship with reality, insisting only that such relations need not be as direct as his master Plato had supposed. A. A. Milne is a clearer and (for this limited illustrative purpose) a more useful author. He makes Piglet insist, as mimeticists always do, that what really matters is whether a poem is true or false. Pooh, a formalist, can see that "ears" would not have rhymed as well as "toes." (The metrical lay-out of the poem on the page, by the way, with head-rhymes rather than end-rhymes, is an ingenious 1928 parody of free verse.) And Piglet's question, in its implications, is still worth pondering. Can it be right, just for the sake of a rhyme, to tell a lie?

PIGLET'S VIEW would do pretty well for Plato or a social realist of the last hundred years or so, but it is Pooh's view which for the moment is in vogue. It may be interesting to consider why.

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Formalism flourishes, as it does today, when literary intellectuals are bored with things as they are, or when they despair of the epistemological struggle to describe them. The first motive is the commoner, probably, the second the more dignified, and that is why epistemological despair attracts most or all of the debate. But I believe boredom to be the principal cause of recent Parisian formalism: the French New Critics themselves, and their disciples, often strike one as advanced victims of urban *ennui*. They have certainly grown bored with radical politics. They may once have thought the social system to be wicked, and perhaps in some vestigial sense still do; but they are rarely activists nowadays, and their contempt for social analysis, whether in fact or fiction, is evidently born of a surfeit. All that is very understandable. We have just lived through the '60s, when "society" was a hopelessly over-used word, and a reaction was bound to set in. Social realities are no longer felt by such people to be interesting enough to be subjected to more and still more analysis. Society, in this state of mind, does not deserve to be analysed. All this is offered as a summary of a mood, not as an argument. (It is evidently no sort of argument). But I hope that, considered as a summary, it is not gravely unjust. It is not, I hasten to add, my own mood.

BOREDOM is in itself boring. It requires no explanation, though its sources may, and everyone knows what it is like. But though it may be easy to understand, it is, in this instance, difficult intelligently to share. It extends beyond ordinary social reality, like the family and the café, to embrace the lecture-hall or *amphithéâtre* and ultimately the whole descriptive task of literary study itself. It extends to the analysis of literature, as such analysis is usually understood: just saying what a book is like, and what happens in it. Even granting that French academic criticism, as an historical enquiry, is less abundant and less adventurous than English, it cannot really be sensible to say that all this is totally and without exception boring. Nor is the social reality of Paris, unless to the most jaded of human palates, tedious to observe or to take part in. An outsider is bound to be puzzled by the sheer intellectual despair that underlies the New Criticism. Paris, though not itself boring, is full of bored people. To explain why would be an interesting exercise, though hardly the task of a literary historian.

And full of lonely people. Raymond Aron, in what is still the best account of the events of May 1968, *La Révolution Introuvable* (1968), has put loneliness high among the causes of that mindless explosion. Anyone who has sat in the bare, inhospitable class-rooms of the Collège de France or of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, or in one of the dozen or so universities now scattered in and around greater Paris, senses the isolation that drives the young to such desolate places. In British universities, which are more often pleasant retreats interspersed with lawns and gardens and rendered human by the intimacies of personal teaching, that sense of isolation is by and large far weaker. But even here the spur of loneliness can be felt and avowed, and among academics as well as students. A Fellow of a Cambridge college has recently commended intellectual fads not on any intrinsic ground, but simply as a prophylactic against solitude. They offer possibilities of "inter-personal relationships", which I take to be a pompous phrase for friendship: "If a work is new, that is an excellent reason for attending to it."[1] Presumably "new" here does not mean merely of recent publication, but substantially new, or saying something that has not been said before. The difficulty here is that you cannot tell what is new until you know what is old; and much recent French criticism is mutton dressed as lamb.

But it is the remark about personal relationships that is the more disquieting. Are there really people, even in British universities, so humanly deprived that they are driven to respect what they know to be merely faddish in a despairing hope of intimacy? That would amount to a harsh rebuke, merited or not, against the institutions that drive them to such courses. But it also smacks honestly of self-rebuke. Indeed the state of mind in which an academic can publicly declare his allegiance to a fad which he knows to be no more than that deserves some wondering contemplation.

A RAPID OUTLINE of this phenomenon of the 1960s and after, crude as such outlines must be, may put the issues into some sort of initial clarity. The French New Criticism has now run a quick passage through three principal stages.

It began, around 1960, as part of a fashion which existed as strongly in Anglo-American criticism, namely a late-Marxist view of literature as a social product and as a mirror of the society that produced it. All reality, including literature, was held to be social, and a work of literature was the outcome of whatever social conditioning the author—always represented here as a hapless victim of social pressures—had been subjected to. I am tempted to dub that brief phase of the Western critical tradition the

[1] Jonathan Culler, *Times Literary Supplement* (9 March 1973).

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"society-and" period, since many of its titles included that ritual phrase. A mimic could easily reproduce the manner in which, in England at least, the sacred word "society" was pronounced in those days, the second vowel being regularly accorded a sort of souped-up version of a classless East-Midland accent. It is now a dead fashion.

The second phase, which retained much of the jargon of latter-day Marxism, was structuralist. The linguist Saussure was its god, the anthropologist Lévi-Strauss its prophet, and it dominated the fashionable mind of the mid-'60s. Its devotees did not know, or did not care, that much of the linguistic structuralism of Saussure, who died in 1913, had already been overturned, They held that, just as Saussure had "shown" how, beneath all the instances of individual speech-acts, or *parole*, there is a structure of language itself, or *langue*, so in anthropology and in literature, beneath all the individual instances. . . . I recall hearing M. Roland Barthes, then the most fashionable of French literary critics, lecturing in California in 1967 on "the Principle of Narrativity." Just as there is *parole* and *langue*, so beneath all the individual instances of story there must exist, waiting to be revealed, the principle of Story itself. Advanced spirits in Paris were now looking for it. They did not find it, however, or the other structures they were looking for, and the game moved on.

The third phase, and the present one, is a structuralism of mind. Since Barthes, and especially from the late '60's on, has made this his favoured territory, I shall refer to these three phases by the shorthand titles of Marx, Saussure and Barthes; though Phase III plainly coincides, and by no accident, with the Anglo-American vogue of Marshall McLuhan and a European fashion for semiotics. Barthes represents an increasingly dogmatic subjectivism. It is an error, he has recently claimed in *S/Z* (1970) and *Le plaisir du texte* (1973), to have supposed that we can ever through literature learn to know social reality (Marx) or even the internal structure of a literary work (Saussure). Reality is a mental creation, and what we learn to know better, through criticism, is the shape of our own minds. Each his own structuralist. . . . A middle-period work like his *Critique et vérité* (1966), a reply to a derisive attack on the new school by an established academic critic, warned the world at an early stage that subjectivism was where the neo-critical road was leading. That road, after all, is one of the *grandes routes* of French intellectual life. It is a road already trodden, some of the way, by Proust, Gide, Valéry, and Sartre. But not everyone has followed it so far. Much of the newest Parisian criticism, in writers like Sollers and Kristeva, is a hot competition in subjectivism. Introversion is now the rage: more subjective (one imagines one murmuring to another) than thou.

An American critic once remarked that mankind now lives in the first historical age to be "fully self-conscious of its fictions."[2] The assertion, odd as it is, sums up much of the self-confidence that characterises the latest versions of *nouvelle critique*. It is now very widely believed, and not only in Paris, that realism, in the broadest sense of the term, or the doctrine that immediate reality can and should be described in fiction, is an antiquated and traditional doctrine; and that fictionality, or a technical self-consciousness about the status of fictions, is the latest thing.

Bernard Bergonzi, in his acutely sensible study of recent fiction in English, *The Situation of the Novel* (1970), makes that point again and again. The book is a generous and convincing defence of a British tradition against its American and continental rivals: realism versus (among other things) fictionality. It may stand worthily on the shelf beside Donald Davie's *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (1973), which labours convincingly to show that we British are not down-hearted: not everything in the modern poetry-garden of the Western world, in this century, has after all been Franco-American. Clearly the British are on the move; the worm is turning. But what a slow, and what a cautious turn! You would hardly guess from all this that the British in recent times have ever been capable of any startling artistic originality—merely of a sort of sober, naive excellence that a hurried world might easily be forgiven for overlooking. Just listen to Bergonzi: if some new American novelists have been neglected in England, he writes,

> it is, perhaps, not just because of a lazy English distaste for literary experimentation, though this is doubtless a factor; it may also be that the English, in their conservative way, are still inclined to believe in reality as traditionally conceived. . . .

Or again:

> I have tried to indicate the extraordinary conservatism of English cultural life and the tenacious survival of nineteenth-century forms. . . .[3]

It would be pointless and imprudent to hound an ally when the adversary is so evidently elsewhere, and Bergonzi can see as clearly as anyone that realism is nothing like the exhausted vein that fashionable opinion supposes.

[2] R. P. Blackmur, *Anni mirabiles 1921–1925* (Washington, 1956), a brief series of lectures delivered in 1956.

[3] Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel* (London, 1970), from the Pelican edition (1972), pp.110, 233.

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Fashionable opinion here is neatly represented by the notorious remark by John Barth, the American novelist, that "God wasn't too bad a novelist, except that he was a realist." But all this is surely to misread the signs of the times. Whenever smart critics pronounce realism to be dead, whether in drama or novel, a new talent like Kingsley Amis or Harold Pinter, and usually a British talent, rises up to prove them wrong. And the world, and not just the British, goes on reading and watching British realism and asking for more. Galsworthy on television has just triumphed behind the Iron Curtain. Lively minds like Miss Iris Murdoch, in a scattering of articles,[4] or J. P. Stern in *On Realism* (1973), think up crushingly convincing arguments on the British side. For half-a-century now, realism has been the great escape-artist of our literary tradition: forever reported missing, or behind bars, or dead, and forever startling the occupying power with some daring *coup*. It cannot lie down and die.

I HAVE CALLED *The Situation of the Novel* a defence of the British tradition in fiction because it is so defensive. Why is Professor Bergonzi, and why is nearly everybody else, so desperately certain that realism is conservative? To Henry James, in his essay on Trollope (1883), just the reverse seemed true. The pendulum was then swinging in the other direction: he saw Trollope (and this will astonish all but the most alert readers of the Barchester novels) as a master, or rather a victim, of old-fashioned fictionality—an excessively, antiquatedly self-conscious technician. "He took a suicidal satisfaction in reminding the reader", remarks James disapprovingly, "that the story he was telling was only, after all, a make-believe." James calls all this "a pernicious trick"; it is also, as he rightly insists, a very old and traditional trick in English fiction. Fielding had used it, Sterne had built *Tristram Shandy* around it: far from being *nouveau*, fictionality nearly a hundred years ago looked old-hat. Trollope himself would have appreciated the irony whereby, some ninety years after his death, his techniques have come to look more *avant-garde* than those of a patronising young American rival like Henry James. So perhaps we had better look more closely at the competing claims of realism and fictionality to be called modern.

If it is the modern European novel that is in question, then realism is plainly flourishing with Scott and Jane Austen in English, Balzac and Stendhal in French. So it is not obviously more than a century-and-a-half old. Well, fictionality is much, much older than that, even in the novel. It is there in *Don Quixote*, and powerfully and totally there, with batteries of supporting positions, in Sterne. *Tristram Shandy* is a fiction about the impossibility of writing a fiction. So fictionality in that same tradition is more than two hundred years old. Of course this proves nothing but a priority, and there is no need to fall into the advertising state of mind where New means Good. But if one is faced, day after day, with the assertion that realism is conservative and fictionality *avant-garde*, it is helpful to clear up the matter of priority. The truth is that realism is a young and very healthy plant in Western fiction: it is fictionality that is ancient. The narrative ingenuities of Beckett, Borges and the *nouveau roman* belong to a more antique European tradition than those of *Waverley*, *Emma*, or the *Riverside Villas Murder*. The roots of the "new" run deeper than the roots of modern British fiction. They run backwards and downwards in the direction of classical and Renaissance mock-epic, the 18th-century French critical argument about *vrai* and *vraisemblance* in fiction, Fielding's *Shamela* and *Pasquin*, and the whole wide European vogue for Sterne. On the long view, it is realism that is new.

ALL THAT IS a matter of technique. More puzzling is the view that literary realism is *politically* conservative. The emergence of the *nouvelle critique* from a welter of literary Marxism has left its mark here, in its tendency to see every enemy in right-wing colours, and this remains something more than a matter of jargon. Words like "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" are still used in such circles as if they meant something real. *Tel Quel*, the principal journal of the school, is still tricked out with Maoist slogans, and the very dictators who would dismiss the New Critics as "bourgeois decadents" and pack them off to execution or the labour-camp are still paraded in the writings of those critics as the hopes of mankind. All this, though, is a matter of loose historical association. A more crucial question needs to be posed and answered: is there any substantive connection between Marxism or any other prospect of social change, on the one hand, and the doctrine that fiction can only give an account of itself or of the mind that reads it?

THAT DOCTRINE, after all, is no exaggeration of the present Barthesian position. At least as early as 1963, Barthes was denying the very possibility of realism.

[4] Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and Beautiful Revisited", *Yale Review*, 49 (1960); "Against Dryness", ENCOUNTER (January 1961). The former article, the fuller of the two, risks oblivion by its very title; it has nothing to do with Burke, but is one of the most powerful and eloquent advocacies of literary realism in our times.

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> If the history of literature, in the end, is a history of techniques, that is not because literature is only technique . . . but because technique is the only power able to suspend perception [*le sens du monde*] and to keep open the imperative question addressed to it; for it is not replying that is hard, but asking: one speaks by asking and replies by silence.[5]

Fiction cannot tell: it can merely be read and re-read. See, for example, *S/Z*, where Barthes reads Balzac's *Sarrasine* as a system of five codes of *lisibilité*, or the multiple process by which one reads a novel.

The notion that a literary text could ever be shown to have its own structure has by now been totally abandoned. A "text" presents the reader, in this revised doctrine, not with a structure but with a "structuration"—the process by which the individual reader persuades himself, no doubt mistakenly, that a structure exists. In recent versions of this extreme of subjectivism, all literature is a seductive cheat; as Robbe-Grillet has claimed of his recent novel *Projet pour une révolution à New York* (1970), it is a "ludic organisation" or play-system. What is more, play is now and henceforth the only possibility, even in politics.

All this looks like a curious position for a radical. No doubt conservatives have often felt something like this; and as conservatives they have an obvious tactical interest in persuading radicals to despair about the efficacy of political action. If you believe, as Robbe-Grillet and Barthes appear to do, that there *are* no solutions to political problems, then you are unlikely to give political establishments much to worry about, unless in the way of an occasional theatrical street-demonstration. If you believe that you cannot even know and describe social phenomena, then the case for changing them fades into the deepest uncertainty. It ends as little more, indeed, than a matter of faith. Why change what you cannot know? The denial of realism by the French New Critics in recent years, whether conservative or not in purpose, is surely conservative in effect. President Pompidou, if he noticed such matters at all, would have been delighted.

All human activity, in this absolute view, is a mere game, and that judgment includes not just fiction but war, revolution, and reform. No literature, writes Barthes in the same prefatory essay of 1963, "no literature in the world has ever replied to the question it put." Literature, he continues, is like a god whose perpetual motto is "I disappoint": it is the art of disappointing, "l'art de la déception." You may think literature is telling you something. You may think Proust is informing you about life in the *Belle Epoque*. You are wrong.

This assertion, bold as it is, stands on an argumentative base so modest as to be almost invisible. Before pronouncing on world literature, we had better read it: enough of it, at least, and in enough variety, to make such assertions carry some cash-value. The French *nouvelle critique*, notoriously, is ethnocentrically French. And it is limited in a still more damaging sense. It assumes that literature began around 1800. Its favourite authors, among the dead, are Balzac, Flaubert, and Proust. If you think something like that, then it is bound to look obvious that realism is old-hat and fictionality the latest thing. But a good dose of literary history could clear the matter up at once.

THE CULT OF THE NEW, in its more recent forms, is now something of a curiosity. I grope here gratefully towards a word which I have only recently learned—"palaeo-modern." The word sums up not just the French New Criticism, but also the New Left of the 1960s which in a sense it supplanted, and a good many other post-War fashions to boot. A palaeo-modern is one who, craving for intellectual novelty, imagines that something conceived half-a-century ago or more is the latest thing. The New Left was a classic case of the phenomenon, since it thought Marx the latest thing in socio-economics, and imagined that an early 19th-century German had answers to late 20th-century problems. Of course it is obvious that the antiquity of a scripture is no objection to its truth. But it is a very conclusive objection to its novelty, and the epithet "new" in "New Left" is going to take some explaining from apologetic historians. So it is with *nouvelle critique*. Its claim to novelty, after all, is no mere garnishing: it is crucial to its undertaking. Abandon it, and much of the interest collapses.

If anyone doubts this, the matter is easily tested. Try suggesting, in any class or conversation where such ideas are in vogue, that an assertion by Barthes, say, would have seemed familiar to Dr Johnson or Sainte-Beuve or even I. A. Richards. It does not matter whether "familiar" here means familiar-and-true or familiar-and-false: the charge is deeply felt, and it is met with scornful, even outraged rejection. There is no room in that world for the possibility that a view might be old and right, or wrong and new. To be a New Critic is to preen oneself on being up-to-date. It is to see oneself as victor in a contest for modernity.

WHY ARE SOME INTELLECTUALS so ardently in love with what they suppose to be new? The list of motives is long, and not self-exclusive. The intellectual may be lonely, and a

[5] Roland Barthes, preface to Bruce Morrissette, *Les romans de Robbe-Grillet* (Paris, 1963), p. 14.

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fashionable idea can offer a precious chance at intimacy. He may be deeply infatuated by a coterie-teacher employing all the wiles characteristic of the species. He may be bowled over, as a student, by the sheer freshness of something no schoolmaster had ever mentioned to him. He may fall in love with polysyllables. He may relish the cosiness of belonging to a clique, the sense that "I know something you don't know." He may be afraid, and with reason, of the loneliness of original thought.

All this concerns the way of the disciple, and of course there are other ways of reading the New Criticism. One can sip rather than swallow. Unimpressed by its solemnities, one might still be amused by its real capacity to amuse. There may be few belly-laughs at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, but the atmosphere there is still compatible, for the discerning, with a dry and humorous cynicism. There are those there who, in their own ludic way, are playing the game for fun, which is the only good reason for playing a game at all. Barthes's latest title, *Le plaisir du texte*, is aptly chosen: rightly considered, the *nouvelle critique* is not just a revived debate about the alleged autonomy of literature. It can be a nearly autonomous activity of its own. It is not so much about literature as about itself, a prime example of the extreme formalism it has now embraced. It can even achieve moments of literary distinction, and belongs at its best to that refined aphoristic mode that the English have admired in the French for three centuries and which they find so hard to imitate. When M. Lévi-Strauss calls thought "a treasured excrement" (*"La pensée est un excrément qu'on thésaurise"*), one is back in something like the world of Diderot or La Rochefoucauld. Such men, whatever their claims to standing as critics, do not have to contest a claim to be men of letters. They share one vital property with poets: a talent to use language beyond mere use, to render speech memorable and to enforce upon the reader surprise.

It surely follows, however, that demands on English-speaking critics to employ the techniques of the Parisian school are beside the point. Professor John Weightman, in a recent book, *The Concept of the Avant-Garde* (1973), has revealed himself in a sympathetic light as the victim of an over-developed cultural conscience, confessing there to a sense of "guilt and inadequacy" over his failure to enjoy the *nouveau roman*; and he sounds equally guilty when he contemplates its critical apparatus. All this strikes me as engagingly but needlessly scrupulous. These "techniques" do not exist to be used. Even those who invent them do not use them for more than a matter of weeks or months. The pretty patterns on the blackboards of the Grandes Ecoles are wiped off before the next class, survive a little longer in student notebooks, and are quickly forgotten. Each successive work of *nouvelle critique* offers not so much an example of how new tools can be used, but yet another set of still newer tools. The whole armoury now looks rather like the fun-room of a Hollywood star, cluttered with expensive toys that were tired of soon after they were delivered. In that world a mere novel or poem, which must now be called a "text", is an essentially perfunctory illustration of a critical abstraction; and a book like *S/Z*, though it informs about Barthes's state of mind in or around the year 1970, cannot seriously be said to inform about Balzac. The New Critic is simply not interested in what a work of literature has to give.

THE ULTIMATE PUZZLE about "advanced" French criticism is its continuing success in isolating itself from the intellectual life of the Western world. To speak of success is to imply that isolation to be deliberate, and so it is. Its object is to allow a sense of national grandeur to survive untouched. And *nouvelle critique*, in its own curious and coterie way, is in the end a patriotic movement. Whatever London or New York may think or do, Paris must claim an independent literary existence: to abandon that would be to abandon a cherished assumption many centuries old.

In this aspect, the *nouvelle critique* may be seen as a sort of literary equivalent to President Pompidou's nuclear tests, and *The Pleasure of the Test* might make a diverting title for the English version of Barthes's book. Something is exploded—a big noise, with attendant protests—to demonstrate that France has not sunk her identity. Her flag still flies.

I do not believe, however, as a lover of that flag, that the larger intellectual claims of the New Criticism can in all seriousness be allowed. It is neither as new nor as French as it is eager to believe. Its claims to novelty, though strenuous, are also strained. True originality, as Cocteau once told the French Academy, consists in trying to behave like everybody else without succeeding. How, then, would one describe those who try unsuccessfully to be different? "*Je veux qu'on me distingue*," said Molière's Misanthrope: "I would like people to think me special." The New Critic is decidedly an Alceste; and his task, still unfulfilled, is to persuade the world (and not just Paris) that he is as odd as he hopes he is.

THAT ODDITY is none the less an affectation. That is plain not just in what the New Critic asserts but, even more powerfully, in what

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he takes for granted. It is in the casual asides and easy assumptions of the *nouvelle critique* that its antiquity is revealed. Its modernity is old-fashioned. Its preconceptions are late 19th-century or, at the latest, pre-1914. It began by assuming a structuralist view of linguistics propounded in Geneva before the first World War. It still imagines that words like "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" mean something, not just as terms in intellectual history but as social realities. It assumes a good deal of 19th-century positivism, including the demand (when disputatiously convenient) either to define one's terms or to accept defeat in debate. It holds that, for everybody except the New Critic himself, who is miraculously exempt, all literary judgments are the effects of social conditioning and are without objective standing. It supposes, as Barthes has put it in a brisk aside in the opening paragraphs of *S/Z*, that "science does not evaluate." It is, in fact, an historically belated instance of literary subjectivism; philosophically speaking, it is evidently pre-Popper, and caught somewhere between early and late Wittgenstein. True, there is nothing sacred about the collected works of Karl Popper or Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, and the New Critic is as free as anyone else to show that they are wrongheaded. But he has not yet arrived at that point. The simple truth is that the last forty years of Anglo-Saxon intellectual life remain in those circles simply unread. The New Criticism is composed in nationalistic ignorance of that intellectual life.

IMAGINE A MAN living in the garret of a decaying house. He is young, though of old family, and a long ancestral tradition has refined his tastes and conversation but enfeebled his will. The house is an inherited one, but the inheritance is not enough to keep it clean or even in repair. The youth can no longer afford to live in all of it, so he has moved to the top, and is trying to let out what is left. Failing that, he might sell off the furniture; but it belonged to his great-grandparents, and he cannot bear to see it go. He is not even sure anyone would buy it.

It might be, though, in the turn of fashion, that old furniture would do as it is. Especially with new covers. . . . With new covers, the world might even think it new.

A Message

Sometimes I hear your voice in others,
censored by distance (like a family face):
was she at school with you, before or after,
born (or her mother bred) in the same place,
your cousin, or some sister of some lover?

One thinks of those genetic trees
down which we drop from Eve or someone tougher;
but tones can be transmitted, gestures,
talents quite new each world makes us discover,
then scatter to our friends, our slaves, our masters.

So you must sometimes hear or see
some misplaced hint of what you thought unique
(as we seem forced to do): and so survives
diffusedly, like fragments of a wreck
along a coast, one summer of our lives.

Silenced, we still communicate:
imperfectly, across that spreading life
where our unknown ill-copied replicas,
starting with equal joy where we left off,
make something of our second marriages.

Alistair Elliot

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Petersburg (USA)

The Power of Assembly

By Max Egremont

PETERSBURG is a sleepy town in southern Virginia where the pace of life is slow. At the end of the Civil War the Confederate army was besieged here for over a year, before Robert E. Lee retreated to surrender at Appomattox. In 1831, in nearby Southampton County, a slave called Nat Turner led an abortive rebellion against the white farmers (it was crushed and he was executed). Petersburg is in the middle of the Virginia tobacco country, and when you walk through the streets you can smell the sweet aroma of the tobacco leaves that have been brought in from the flat featureless land that surrounds the town.

Many of the people who live around Petersburg are desperately poor (in some of the outlying rural counties 70% of the population live below the U.S. government's official "poverty level"). There was, until recently, little hope for these ramshackle agricultural and predominantly black communities. Since the time of the post-Civil War "Reconstruction" Period the Virginia State and County authorities have tended to forget about their steadily worsening condition.

But it was here that in 1968 Don Anderson, who in the 1950s graduated from the University of Michigan (and the London School of Economics), came to set up a unique experiment in poverty alleviation. He calls it "The Assemblies." Anderson, whose ancestors were slaves in the southwestern part of Virginia, describes his project as an attempt to help the poor to help themselves. But essentially it is a populistic movement that is in the process of gaining political control of the rural counties in this part of the south.

An Assembly consists of 50 representatives from one county who are elected by a series of committees. Anderson's main point is that, under his system, which he holds up as an example of Jeffersonian "grass roots democracy" in action, the individual problems of a whole area can be brought to the attention of a central deliberative body. Each member of an Assembly is in contact, through the committee that elects him, with 42 members of his community. So far Don Anderson has set up twenty Assemblies in this area of Virginia, mostly in the rural regions, although he has succeeded in establishing four within the city of Portsmouth.

A county's Assembly will usually meet once a month in a local hall. Anderson and his staff (a salaried assistant and 8 full-time volunteers) take care to prepare an order paper beforehand, although they rarely participate in the discussion that results. The meeting is conducted along strict parliamentary lines, the procedures being derived from Anderson's stay in England (and his careful study of Erskine May!). A Speaker is elected and no one may speak without his permission—if they do Anderson interrupts to remind the Assembly of the rules of debate. Various members of the Assembly have been allotted different responsibilities; for example, if a person has a query about the advisability of planting sweet potatoes on his land it will be answered by the member of the Assembly who has responsibility for agriculture.

WHEN ASKED ABOUT the "political aims" of the Assemblies Anderson will deny that they have any. The scheme exists, he says, to acquaint the poor with the different types of assistance that are available to them through government-sponsored welfare schemes of which they would otherwise be ignorant. Indeed, superficially, such an apolitical position is essential, for to pay the salaries of himself and his deputy director and the living expenses of his volunteers he has to obtain grants from churches and foundations (the Ford Foundation turned him down). So he points to the evidence of his success in getting people to help themselves by setting up cheap clothing stores and small agricultural co-operatives, and to the low cost of the Assemblies (approximately $100,000 a year) compared to other similar operations. These communities exist, therefore they must be helped; ostensibly this is the only message that he seeks to get across to those whose support he wishes to gain.

Yet Anderson's Assemblies is one of the most significant movements in the American South, whether one looks at it from the political or from the social point of view. When an Assembly meets, bringing people together who live in the same county and who all feel, in varying degrees, the need of assistance, these people will inevitably

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discuss the best way for them to bring their problems to the attention of those who have the power to help. The inevitable answer is to gain a measure of that power for themselves. Thus two counties in this part of Virginia now have a black majority on their governing bodies, or Board of Supervisors (only three other counties in the United States are controlled by blacks), and these board members are all products of their local Assemblies.

At election time the Assemblies are particularly active. They encourage their communities to vote and to play a large part in the campaign. During one Assembly meeting that I attended, a smartly dressed middle-aged man stood up to caution his audience against "complacency"—at the next election, he said, a greater effort must be made than ever before because, despite their lack of numerical strength, the whites in the area have still not forgotten their old supremacy. . . .

DON ANDERSON, underneath some exterior eccentricities (in his spare time he dresses up in a kilt and plays the bagpipes), is a tireless and sagacious leader. Aggressive militancy is not his style, largely because in southern Virginia neither the whites (who are not afraid to use violence) nor the State authorities would stand for it. He works slowly, only moving into action when there is a good chance of success. In the autumn of 1970 the Assemblies organised a boycott of a county High School to protest against the squalid condition of the building. As a result a new school is to be constructed. Because of discriminatory hiring practices and improper treatment of clients, another Assembly requested that a County Welfare Supervisor be fired. Eventually the Supervisor resigned under pressure. The Assemblies were also responsible for producing the first black State Trooper in Virginia.

Anderson is ambitious for his project. This year he is to move over the state line, to set up the first Assembly in northern North Carolina, a region where the Ku Klux Klan is still a force to be reckoned with. From Petersburg he hopes to spread his operation over the entire South, quietly and wrapped in the cloth of the church. Every Assembly meeting begins with a hymn; but for some it is a call to battle as well as a call to prayer.

Two Russian Writers

Fadeyev & Tvardovsky—By HELEN VON SSACHNO

IT WAS announced on the front page of the Soviet *Literaturnaya Gazeta* early last year: the establishment of an Alexander Fadeyev award for outstanding work in the field of "War Literature", consisting of gold and silver medals to be awarded by the secretariat of the Soviet Writers' Union in association with the political Commissars of the Red Army and Navy. The award was intended as a mark of recognition of the patriotism, political commitment, and artistic qualities of writers who convincingly portrayed the "heroic achievements of the Soviet people in defence of its socialist homeland." Nothing surprising here. But that it should have been named after Alexander Fadeyev, the former secretary-general of the Soviet Writers' Union who committed suicide in May 1956, could have (and probably did) raise a few eyebrows.

Fadeyev's lifelong combination of the roles of writer and politician puts his whole career in an ambiguous light and was ultimately disastrous to both. He was sixteen when the Revolution (*i.e.* the October seizure of power) broke out, and was a pupil at the commercial school at Vladivostok. He fired a pistol at the picture of the Tsar in his parents' home and then pointed it at his own reflection in the mirror—a histrionic gesture of whose symbolical nature he was well aware, and a kind of dress rehearsal of the real tragedy of 13 May 1956. Then, no less melodramatically, the boy burnt his poems and left home to join a band of Bolshevik militants. The three years of partisan warfare that followed were reflected in his short novel *Rasgrom* ("The Massacre"), on which his reputation as a Soviet writer was to be based; it is undoubtedly one of

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the most colourful literary documents of the early period of War Communism.

He did not write a great deal more. There is an uncompleted novel called *The Last of the Udege Tribe*, a description of the Soviet nationality policies in Siberia; and in 1944 he published a collection of War dispatches. Then there are the first few chapters of a similarly uncompleted novel, *Black Metallurgy*; and finally his chief work, *The Young Guard*, a novel about the partisans in the Second World War (which he had to rewrite completely at Stalin's bidding). This took him some four years, and in the end "Stalin's battle" was given its literary apotheosis.

> Stalingrad is the most tremendous manifestation of brilliant generalship. . . . Stalingrad is the most priceless fruit of the genius whose name the town bears. . . .

THEN THERE BEGAN THE PHASE of total subjection that was to be ultimately so disastrous. So completely did Fadayev identify himself with Stalin's personal dictatorship that after the latter's death he became a symbol of the personality cult. For this he had more than ample opportunity. With the exception of a few years during the Second World War, he remained president of the Writers' Union (he was Maxim Gorky's successor) until his death. He was a member of the Party's Central Committee for 16 years. He was also a member of the committee that granted the Stalin Prize (of which he was himself a winner). He was president of the Soviet Peace Council and vice-president of the World Peace Council. He travelled from country to country, made innumerable speeches, issued orders and laid down the law.

How could all this not affect a writer? His character changed out of all recognition. He knew that his career as an author was over, and that henceforth he could be nothing but a faithful police-dog in the most exposed cultural-political position that the Soviet Union had to offer; and it was this knowledge which began slowly to gnaw away at him. He became an alcoholic, and certain neurotic signs more and more characterised his public appearances. When Stalin died he had long been a dead man himself. As president of the Writers' Union he had to pronounce political judgment on every suspicious literary tendency, and his judgments inevitably carried awesome weight. And now, suddenly, he became the personification of a period that was officially denounced as—criminal! At the 20th Party Congress he was not re-elected to the Central Committee, and his enemies started harrying him.

Mikhail Sholokhov—he was not yet the political watchdog which he became after his speech at the 23rd Party Congress (1966) in which he demanded the death penalty for Andrey Sinyavsky and Juli Daniel—publicly attacked him.

> "After Gorky's death we sought with Comrade Fadeyev to establish a kind of collective leadership in the Writers' Union. Nothing came of that. Fadeyev turned out to have such a domineering trend that he could not be converted to the principle of collegiality. This state of affairs lasted for fifteen years. Today I ask myself: Why did we not tell Fadeyev at the outset that the Writers' Union is not an army—and certainly not a prison chain-gang—and that we writers did not propose to stand to stand to attention in front of you, Comrade Fadeyev? . . ."

IT IS HARD TO GUESS what would have become of him if he had not committed suicide. He might have been sacrificed as a scapegoat of the Personality Cult, or he might have been only temporarily shelved. At all events, after his death a slow process of resurrection began, with the publication first of his very meagre posthumous works; and then, at intervals of several years, of his correspondence.

As a letter-writter Fadeyev was unknown to his contemporaries; in their eyes the President of the Writers' Union was the most corrupt of the corrupt. But now, when the various phases of his corruption were revealed by the publication of his certainly more than carefully edited correspondence, many of these contemporaries were forced at least to reconsider the matter. Here was a man on whose actions and passions the state had secured a monopoly, and whose life had nevertheless ended in disaster. He had faithfully followed the ideological phases of Russian Communism and had been ruined by the changes that followed Stalin's death. His letters revealed that he could not face up to the process of moral destruction that these dialectical leaps had involved. On 29 April 1956, two weeks before his death, he wrote to a friend:

> "I am ill and, as always during an illness, all my private and official affairs have got into a hopeless state of confusion. Meanwhile so much that is basically new has happened that my novel will presumably once more have to be thoroughly rewritten. At all events I am trying to pull myself together to regain at least a certain equilibrium. . . ."

TODAY PATRIOTIC RUBBISH is being honoured in his name. At all events, there is little to be said for the works for which Fadeyev Prizes have been awarded. A gold medal has gone to Sholokhov's still uncompleted novel *They Fought for Their Homeland*, which is war literature at the level of low journalism. Another gold medal has gone to Fadeyev's temporary successor in the Writers' Union, Alexei Surkov, for his quite insipid war poetry. A silver medal went to

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Anatoly Ananiev who since Vsevolod Kochetov's death has been editor of the down-the-line orthodox literary journal *October*. The last martial mediocrity to be honoured is Victor Kondratyenko, editor of the Kiev literary journal *The Rainbow*.

Undoubtedly there are good war-writers in the Soviet Union, such as Victor Nekrasov, who has fallen out of favour (and has now obtained a visa and left for the West); or Konstantin Simonov, Grigori Baklanov, Yuri Bondariov, or Vassily Bykov, who continue to write nothing but "war books" nearly thirty years after the end of World War II. The same applies to the war poems of Vinokurov or Slutzky: no trace there of inflated emotionalism or party-line pathos. But what is wanted by the authorities, or at any rate so it seems after these awards, is martial claptrap, aggressive, verbal strong-arm stuff.

How bitter that Alexander Fadeyev should be resurrected for this purpose! It is surely some chilling mockery—after all, the things for which gold and silver medals are being awarded in his name were his tragic undoing. The award of an "Alexander Fadeyev Gold Medal" to Mikhail Sholokhov belongs to the same category of black humour. One wonders: whose brain-child was this joke? One suspects a bitter Russian wit has been at work.

THREE YEARS HAVE passed since Alexander Tvardovsky's death. Under his successor *Novy Mir* has remained the most discriminating Soviet literary journal, though it has quite given up its old reformist zeal. That makes it all the more interesting to have authentic details from the very editorial centre about the historic time when it was still the voice of literary circles that were looking for social change in the Soviet Union. Tvardovsky never officially formulated his cultural political policy, but he indicated it unmistakably enough by the style, selection, and combination of the various contributions.[1] If one wanted a label for it, one would have to call it a kind of "neo-Communist liberalism", since he wanted somehow to bring about a state of organic interdependence between such polar opposites as ideology and intellectual freedom. Thus he took a hard and uncompromising stand on certain issues of censorship while showing a tolerance or lax indifference especially in areas where his review might be suspected of inducing "ideological defeatism."

He also wanted an uncompromising stand on aesthetic issues of standards. As he was a poet of quality himself, his opinion of new talents was always sought. Incipient poets (and pseudo-poets) sent him their manuscripts in the hope of a little encouragement and possibly even publication. Light is shed on this important and exhausting work in an editor's life by a number of his letters published last summer by the journal *Yunost*; they date from 1954 to 1967, *i.e.* from the time when he was still firmly in command, before his position was slowly undermined.

"I cannot simply remain indifferent to bad poems, I just can't stand them. . . ." That was the platform with which he began his campaign against the poetical inflation to which *Novy Mir* was especially exposed. The beginnings of Soviet literature are associated with Mayakovsky's rhapsodical appearances before Russian audiences numbered in the thousands; thousands are still attracted to poetry readings in the House of Sports (which is not necessarily a criticism of the poetry). Good poems are still written in the Soviet Union, though they are swamped in the flood of bad verse that makes the literary section of more than 7,000 Soviet newspapers and journals a reservoir of homespun doggerel. In this respect universal education in the Soviet Union has given the popular soul an outlet to which there is no parallel elsewhere in the world.

The young just setting out in life—and old-age pensioners hoping to end their careers on Pegasus's back—seem to succumb most readily to the lure of the muses. These are, as it were, the harmless cases; but there are others. There are those who have sacrificed their whole life to their verse, have spent ten or twenty years working away at it, just because some editor has been incautious enough to assure them that they have talents that should be "encouraged. . . ."

In many cases they are helped by publication under such headings as "Poems for the First of May", "Poems by Workers" or "Poems by the Young", thereby voluntarily or involuntarily betraying the immaturity of the products concerned; or a superficial selection is made, and the best work printed in one of the 300 to 400 almanacs that appear annually in Russia. Another outlet is provided by the radio and television time devoted to socialist poetry. Great piles of rubbish are shifted by these means.

[1] A selection was published by Jonathan Cape in 1972: *Novy Mir, 1925–1967* (ed. Michael Glenny).

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Tvardovsky had no time for such third-rate outpourings. He did not mince his words and spared no one's feelings; and occasionally the opinions he expressed were only too much in harmony with a traditional aesthetic outlook. But he always acted in full awareness of what he regarded as his editorial responsibility. His task grew even more difficult when *Novy Mir* was faced with the task of coping with the literary inflation that followed its publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.*

IT WAS IN THE SPRING of 1963 that Nikita Khrushchev, alarmed by the impact made by that work, restricted the author's right to go on with the anti-Stalinist theme as suddenly as he had granted it. "A flood of manuscripts," Khrushchev said, "about the life people led in banishment, in prison and camps is said to be pouring into the offices of journals and publishing houses. I repeat yet again: That is a very dangerous subject and a very difficult theme! The less responsible a person feels for the present and future of our country and the party, the more eagerly do the sensation-mongers, the friends of the disreputable, seize on that subject. Here one must keep within bounds. If all writers were to write only on that subject, what sort of literature would that be? . . ."

Because it had published the first anti-Stalinist documentary, *Novy Mir* was particularly affected by this influx. How it coped with it is unknown. That gives added interest to Tvardovsky's reply to a certain Sh. (the names of his correspondents are indicated only by initial letters) who had submitted for his consideration a so-called problem play of the Stalinist period.

"I read your play to the very end," he wrote, "though after the first few pages I already knew that it would not do for *Novy Mir*. The very way in which you declare your purpose—'to show, not the horror and the suffering, but the beauty and steadfastness of the character of our people' —is not very promising. How can the one be separated from the other? What 'steadfastness' can be involved if there is no 'suffering'? 'Steadfastness' in relation to whom and to what? . . . In me as a reader the exchange of 'horror' and 'suffering' for 'beauty' and 'steadfastness' rouses only a feeling of painful uneasiness for the writer, even though he may well have discovered in his own person the meaning of 'horror' and 'suffering'. . . ."

The unknown writer—and he cannot have been the only one—had written a play that anticipated Khrushchev's new line. The new protagonists were heroes who regarded their confinement in a labour camp as a kind of test of their ideological loyalty. We were now to have the cliché of the

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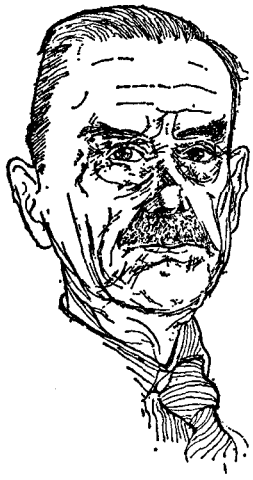
rehabilitated martyr who, when his freedom was restored, continued to live for the greater glory of the party. It is easy to see what Tvardovsky thought of this new propaganda twist to the official cultural line. Nothing at all. So long as he was alive and in control of *Novy Mir* its pages were free of this kind of official cant. This was his greatness as an editor.

Inflation: The Witches' Sabbath

Germany 1923 — By THOMAS MANN



THE GERMAN Inflation had its roots in the First World War which was ruinously costly, not only in terms of human lives, but of labour and raw materials as well. Day after day, year in, year out, fortunes were spent. At the same time numerous commodities that Germany had imported before the War vanished from the market. More currency was in circulation because more men—and women—than usual were working. The Germans became poorer in tangible goods and richer in banknotes. . . .

What was the popular reaction to this state of affairs? Since no one knew what the future would bring, since most people had no one to save for because their sons, husbands, and brothers were at the Front and might never return, and since the rising cost of living made saving next to impossible in any case, they bought whatever they could lay hands on regardless of the price. A pound of rancid butter brought 20 marks on the black market, which began to play a critical role in almost every German household. It came to be regarded as normal and even honourable to break the law by exceeding one's rations and spending unconscionable sums on illegal purchases.

THOMAS MANN'S *memoir of the German Inflation years of 1913–1923 was the text of a lecture which he gave in the USA in 1942. It is here published for the first time, for whatever unfortunate topical value it now has, in a translation by Ralph Manheim.*

IN MY OWN HOME we were relatively law-abiding. I say relatively, because it was becoming almost impossible to live on what the law allowed, for one thing because unscrupulous and insatiable black marketeers diverted so much goods from the already understocked legal market.

The black marketeers—sinister, repellent figures—would come in the evening and talk in whispers to my wife in the vestibule. "For heaven's sake, Herr Hirsch", my wife would say, "forty pfennings for an egg! Why, last week it was only thirty. What are we coming to?"

The black marketeer, a shady young man of nineteen or twenty, too sickly no doubt to serve at the front, but vigorous enough to intimidate my wife who in a way was dependent on him, laughed. "Don't be a fool", he said, "I could ask 50 pfennings if I wanted, or 60 or 70. You need the stuff. You have four children. They have to eat, don't they?"

And so my wife bought four of his expensive eggs. She should have taken eight, for at his next visit, a week later, Herr Hirsch had raised his prices considerably. As a matter of fact he had stopped calling himself Hirsch; now he was Herr Rabenstein—actually von Rabenstein, if I remember right.

HIRSCH VON RABENSTEIN and company on the one hand, and their customers, the German people, on the other helped to bring German inflation into the world, though it also had other midwives who are well known to us. During the War, to be sure, we didn't call it "inflation." We merely complained of the "rising prices" on the legal and illegal markets. We didn't know yet that the disproportion between demand and supply, between the amount of currency in circulation and the amount of commodities available would increase according to a malignant inherent law.

THE BLOCKADE ENDED with the War. Rationing and other wartime restrictions were lifted. But Germany had lost its immense foreign

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holdings, its industry was at a standstill, and the demands of the victor powers made deep inroads on the country's remaining wealth; Germany had lost the confidence of the world and its self-confidence as well. These conditions gave rise to what was then know as the "rush for material goods."

The buying spree that had begun during the War surpassed all bounds afterwards. For fear of currency devaluation, people bought everything in sight—it never occurred to them that in so doing they were helping to devalue the already devalued currency still further. All Germany became one enormous black market. . . .

Once the mechanism of Inflation has been set in motion it is hard to stop. Any attempt on the part of individuals to oppose it is like trying to stop Niagara Falls with an umbrella. The war against Inflation, if it is to succeed, must be a preventive war. On the other hand, economic factors alone would not have sufficed to reduce the German mark, not to a tenth or a hundredth but to a billionth of its former value; political and psychological factors were also at work.

The German penchant for immoderation, for catastrophic irrationality, which since then has brought such unspeakable suffering on the world, was evident even then. Equally evident was the willingness of the German people to put up with whatever their ruling class saw fit. For at least a section of this ruling class, the big industrialists, the inflation was profitable; they were in no hurry to stop it. During those years the Krupps, Stinneses, Thyssens, etc., got rid of their indebtedness, which ran into real millions, by paying their creditors in inflation millions, and thanks to these same inflation millions they acquired real millions-worth of property.

Though Germany was very poor at that time, it possessed great wealth in mineral resources and industrial plant. During the Inflation a radical change occurred; this wealth became concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. The small and medium property-owners lost their holdings, and the biggest snapped them up. They acquired property and paid with paper. Years later one could hear it said that such and such a factory or mine was unproductive and would not be profitable if it had not been acquired for next-to-nothing during the Inflation. . . .

NEVER HAVE THOSE who wanted to make money without working found such favourable conditions as in Germany from 1922 to 1924. All that was needed was a certain degree of ingenuity and unscrupulousness. Honest work, however skilled, brought nothing. Consequently, even ordinarily honest people were infected with the fever of speculation. Peasants filled their houses with sewing machines, pianos, and Persian rugs, and refused to part with their eggs and milk except in exchange for articles of permanent value. Medical students became stock-jobbers. Teachers discussed such topics with their classes as how to convert a little money into a lot of money. The answer: by buying foreign currency, holding it for a while and then reselling it. In that way a million could be turned into five millions and ultimately into a billion.

BUT HADN'T PRICES RISEN correspondingly in the meantime? For the most part, yes, but not necessarily; not if you took your money as fast as your legs would carry you to some innocent grocer or wine dealer or artist. If you were lucky, he had the mark quotation for 9 a.m., but not for 12 noon; the difference—to his disadvantage—could be enormous. On the other hand, if he was a little less innocent he might ring up his bank, sigh, wipe the perspiration from his forehead, and rectify his prices. Yes, the purchaser could also be the loser. For instance, you might drop in at the tobacconist's for a cigar. Alarmed at the price, you'd rush to a competitor, find that his price was still higher, and race back to the first

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shop, which may have doubled or tripled its price in the meantime. There was no help for it, you had to dig into your pocketbook and take out a huge bundle of millions, or even billions, depending on the date. . . .

On Friday evenings you could see workers coming out of the factories with baskets, sacks, and suitcases full of money. It didn't do them much good, for the frightened and greedy shopkeepers often raised their prices faster than the value of the currency fell. It became necessary to pay wages daily, and in the end the firm of Krupp among others began to print its own bank-notes. The cities, even the smallest of them, also took to printing money; it was up to some high official to decide how much. It goes without saying that for the time being forgery ceased to exist as a trade.

Large profits could be made by borrowing money. Anyone who had borrowed money in 1920 and bought something substantial—a house, a farm, or a factory—was well off in 1923. The lender was not so fortunate. Shrewd and far-sighted individuals leapt at the opportunity to victimise old-fashioned people who failed to understand the spirit of the times. Of these there were only too many. How could a man who in his youth had reckoned in thalers, gulden, kurant marks, and later on in Bismarck's gilt-edged reichsmarks, be expected to think in terms of billions and trillions in his old age?

I can still remember the look of pride on our old governess's face when she told us one day that she was planning to retire soon and live on her savings. At the time the few thousand marks she had in the bank were worth less than a penny. People who had once been wealthy and were still living in their dilapidated old mansions sold their art treasures and furniture to sharpers. A Rembrandt might bring them enough to live on for a few weeks. In the end they were turned out into the streets with their pockets full of worthless multicoloured paper.

IN THOSE DAYS you had to keep abreast of the times to survive. Sometimes you were cheated without malice aforethought. During the War I had invested ten thousand marks in a friend's country house, where I was a frequent guest. In a sense I was part-owner of the house. For practical purposes, my loan of ten thousand marks was guaranteed by a lien on the house. In the spring of 1923 my friend informed me that circumstances had obliged him to sell his house, so he was returning my money. As a matter of fact, he added with a smile, it was the same ten thousand, the same banknotes, I had given him in

Inflation & Hitler

From Professor J. P. Stern:

It is misleading and mischievous for journalists and politicians to harp on the parallel between the German hyperinflation of 1923 and the present situation in this country. The causes of the German inflation were either the opposite of, or irrelevant to, those of the current British inflation: among them was the desire to pay off reparations on the cheap. Demands for higher wages were not among these causes, if only because the German workers had no negotiating power; on the contrary, manufacturers hoarded goods and used their *power to hold the workers to ransom.*

It is equally nonsensical to say that the German inflation created Hitler: in fact some nine years elapsed between the Schacht-Luther financial reforms which cured the hyperinflation, and the National Socialist assumption of power in February 1933.

Nothing, it seems to me, is so frightening in the present situation as these professions of historical fatalism. People's conduct is determined not *by what happened in a previous situation which they think is similar to the present, but by their* belief *that their conduct is determined by a previous situation they think similar.*

From Professor Willi Frischauer:

While it is quite true that the British behave differently, behave sensibly, in a crisis; and it is also true that, in historical perspective, no two political circumstances are identical, Professor Stern seems to have missed the crucial point of the connexion between the German inflation of 1923 and Hitlerism.

The crux of the matter is 1923, not 1933. It was no coincidence that Hitler's beerhouse putsch of November 8, 1923 was made when inflation had reached an absurd level—one dollar equalling 4.2 billion marks.

The extremism of the right and the left was the direct result of the abysmal living conditions engendered by inflation. And, though the beerhouse putsch failed, the blood of the Nazi "martyrs" watered the seed of the horrifying Nazi advance. Hitler used his detention to write "Mein Kampf", the abortion of his earlier plans inspired his followers and the sinister forces behind them to provide him with another and better chance.

If any logical chain of events can ever be established with certitude, it is the one which brought Nazism in the wake of inflation and economic misery.

in THE TIMES *(London)*

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1917; they had been lying untouched in his safe all the while. There I stood, incredulous, baffled and embarrassed, holding the clean, almost new, handsomely engraved museum pieces.

THOSE WHO JOINED IN the "rush for material goods" didn't necessarily fare any better. I can think of no one in my circle of acquaintances who succeeded in weathering the inflation with all his possessions intact. And most of the new fortunes amassed by adventurers vanished as quickly as they had come into being. That is the main reason why I have always regarded the German Inflation as a kind of mirage, a witches' sabbath, that vanished, leaving nothing behind it but headaches and regrets. In the summer of 1923 the Inflation, like the legendary witches' dance, became wilder and wilder, the figures rose faster and faster. Then suddenly the cock crowed, the night was over, and the witch, exhausted and disillusioned, found herself back in her old kitchen. The cock in this case was Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, President of the *Reichsbank*, who with his enormous stand-up collar did indeed rather resemble a rooster.

LITERATURE is an international undertaking, and I personally had little to complain of during the Inflation. My family of eight was able to live tolerably well on the $25 I received each month from the American literary magazine *The Dial* for a letter from Germany. One of my sons was at a boarding school in the country. Every term I gave him $5 for his fees, which the headmaster received with satisfaction and gratitude. Other pupils brought silver plates, editions of the classics, live geese, or nothing at all. It was best to have one's children in the country at that time, for life in the cities was mad.

My youngest daughter sat on her rocking-horse and called out: "The Dollar is up!" when the horse's head rose. The same words were sung to the first notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which have now become a symbol of victory. People spoke of nothing but marks, dollars, and pounds, and the streets of the big cities resembled nothing so much as a stock exchange gone wild. The bars and night-clubs were full to bursting with profiteers spending their ill-gotten gains by the handful.

A SEVERE INFLATION is the worst kind of revolution. The stern measures—currency restrictions, curtailed production, draconic taxes —that a government can and sometimes must take systematically are nothing by comparison. For there is neither system nor justice in the expropriation and redistribution of property resulting from inflation. A cynical "each man for himself" becomes the rule of life. But only the most powerful, the most resourceful and unscrupulous, the hyenas of economic life, can come through unscathed. The great mass of those who put their trust in the traditional order, the innocent and unworldly, all those who do productive and useful work, but don't know how to manipulate money, the elderly who hoped to live on what they earned in the past—all these are doomed to suffer. An experience of this kind poisons the morale of a nation.

A straight line runs from the madness of the German Inflation to the madness of the Third Reich. Just as the Germans saw their marks inflated into millions and billions and in the end bursting, so they were later to see their state inflated into "the *Reich* of all the Germans", "the German Living Space" "the New Europe", and "the New World Order", and so too they will see it burst. In those days the market woman who without batting an eyelash demanded a hundred million for an egg, lost the capacity for surprise. And nothing that has happened since has been insane or cruel enough to surprise her.

It was during the Inflation that the Germans forgot how to rely on themselves as individuals and learned to expect everything from "politics", from the "state", from "destiny." They learned to look on life as a wild adventure, the outcome of which depended not on their own effort but on sinister, mysterious forces. The millions who were then robbed of their wages and savings became the "masses" with whom Dr Goebbels was to operate.

Inflation is a tragedy that makes a whole people cynical, hardhearted and indifferent. Having been robbed, the Germans became a nation of robbers.

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Stories

Once, once, O once upon a time—
I wish that's how a poem could begin,
And so begin one. That's how stories should.
The sweet parental voices started so,
Opening a book, *my* book, one given by
An aunt or such, inscribed "for Christmas."

No story ever did, I think, unless
Its author, sitting down, said, "O I wish
That *this* is how a story could begin",
And so began, his tongue half in his cheek.
Once, once, O once upon a time—
It's real, magnanimous, and true! I wish,

And wish, and so my friends lose patience with
My stories, and they say, "So this piece is
A story of lost gloves, and, yes, I know
I lost *my* gloves, but why this story, *this*,
This *making-up*?" *Once, once, O once upon*
A time, I say, You lost your gloves, and so . . . .

Never, never, never, never, never . . .
That's a *good* line. And there was one which took
My senses to adventure on a day
Of wind and rain—"One more step, Mr Hands,
And I'll blow your brains out!" Once, once, once, once . . .
I think the alphabet is tired of life.

"But be contemporary!" they shout, thumping
The table, and "Yes, Yes," I say, "I'll buy
That, all or nothing. Just you wait, you'll see.
I'm of the times. . . . My pulse is topical,
And I love all the things I'm meant to love,
Am civil and 'sincere', one of the boys."

Ah, that's better. I mean, I mean it *all*.
Yet when I start to write, my pen puts down
Once, once, O once upon a time . . . .
And that's for nothing and for no one,
Not anyone, not even for a child,
Who, at a table by a bowl of fruit

Sits down to read. It is too personal,
One sorry pass. I'll give away my thought
Of knowing that a life-discarded petal
Fell down, so slowly, when, a child, I read,
And landed on a page and was brushed off.
Once, once, O once, that happened so, like that—

Tender descent—and for a moment was
Completed by its image on the polished
Table. I took it in, did not forget.
Then, *am* I good? Was *that* benevolent?
Now, dignity of tables and of books,
What do *you* say? "There is no answer, friend."

Douglas Dunn

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Auden & the Audenesque

By Bernard Bergonzi

AUDEN'S DEATH IN 1973 evoked some backward glances at his early career but no fresh appraisals. He has been described for many years now as the leader of a group of poets who dominated English poetry in the 1930s, who were socially and politically conscious in a Left-wing way, were influenced by Marx and Freud, and who wrote about public themes: abandoned pits and factories; pylons and locomotives; unemployment at home and the rise of fascism in Europe; the Spanish Civil War. If the account has been added to, it has usually been in the direction of biography, drawing on the descriptions of Auden as a dominating young poet at Oxford provided in the autobiographies of Christopher Isherwood, Stephen Spender and Cecil Day Lewis. The emphasis has, in short, been thematic and generalised, or biographical and historical. Not much has been said about the fact that Auden's influence was as much stylistic as thematic. Auden's legacy from the 'thirties was not only his own dazzling and mannered poetry, but an instantly recognisable idiom, the "Audenesque", which began with a few imitators early in the decade but within ten years was common throughout the English-speaking world. As Karl Shapiro wrote 30 years ago in his long literary-critical poem, *Essay on Rime* (1947) (Shapiro uses "rime" in its old sense as an equivalent for "poetry", and sometimes for "poetics"):

The man whose impress on our rhetoric
Has for a decade dominated verse
In London, Sydney and New York is Auden.
One cannot estimate the consequences
Both good and bad of his success. To open
A current magazine of rime is but
To turn to Auden; and this is not a fad
But some kind of distemper in the practice
of modern poetry.

Not everything in Auden's own poetry was "Audenesque." From the beginning he had been a protean master of forms with not one style but many. To quote Shapiro again:

Auden, a man of many aptitudes
And that convincing artistry which draws
A following, himself has set us models
So variform as to deny identity
To style.

Auden's *Poems* of 1930 contained poems that resisted wide imitation, particularly the love poems or the cryptic reflective pieces written in short lines, with a compact or repetitive syntax. Nor were Auden's songs and lyrics more than moderately influential. Indeed, it is only in his second collection, *Look, Stranger!* (1935), that one sees the full emergence of the Audenesque, by which I mean that particular manner of Auden's that became a collective idiom. Cecil Day Lewis was Auden's first unabashed disciple and imitator. They became acquainted at Oxford, where, although Auden was three years younger, Day Lewis succumbed heavily to his influence, particularly in 1927–8, when Auden was in his final undergraduate year and Day Lewis, having already graduated, was teaching in a prep school in North Oxford. Under Auden's dominance Day Lewis's verse changed rapidly from a neo-Georgian to an Audenesque manner; one of the sections of Day Lewis's *Transitional Poem* of 1929 contains an epigraph from Auden, while *The Magnetic Mountain* (1933) closely imitates Auden for long stretches at a time. By contrast, Stephen Spender, also much influenced by Auden at Oxford, possessed a tougher and more individual poetic personality; Auden's influence was more thoroughly absorbed and was more apparent in themes and choice of subject than in verbal mannerism, although an occasional line like "Northwards the sea exerts his huge mandate" from "The Port" in Spender's *Poems* (1933), is a pure example of the Audenesque. Louis MacNeice, who is often placed with Spender and Day Lewis as part of the "Auden Group", seems to have known Auden only casually at Oxford and to have developed independently as a poet. His close contact with Auden did not begin until they collaborated in *Letters from Iceland* in 1936.

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IT WAS THE ANTHOLOGY *New Country* of 1933 that found Auden a wider audience and spread his influence. One of the contributors, Charles Madge, wrote in his "Letter to the Intelligentsia":

But there waited for me in the summer morning
Auden, fiercely. I read, shuddered and knew
And all the world's stationary things
In silence moved to take up new positions. . . .

The recent supplement to the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the first occurrence of "Audenesque" in a quotation from *Scrutiny* in 1940. This seems improbably late and in fact the word occurs much earlier in the title of Gavin Ewart's "Audenesque for an Initiation" published in *New Verse* in December 1933. (Admittedly the word is generally an adjective, while Ewart here used it as a noun, similar to "humoresque"). This poem, a remarkable achievement for a schoolboy of seventeen, as Ewart then was, is a witty and spirited parody of Auden's "Get there if you can. . . ." from the 1930 *Poems* (itself, of course, a parody of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall"). A few months later Ewart gave further evidence both of his own fascination with Auden and of the way in which Auden's name and influence were increasingly taken for granted. In "Journey" (*New Verse*, April 1934) Ewart wrote:

Where do I want to go? Let me see the map.
All these roads are Auden's, old chap.
I've been over them once, following his tracks;
The private paths are Eliot's, stony and complex. . . .

In using the image of the map, Ewart shrewdly directed attention to a major feature of Auden's imaginative universe, and one of the most influential. Landscapes and maps, lists and catalogues, were indeed a recurring element in Auden's poetry. But to make the point too baldly, is, once more, to emphasise content rather than form; critics of Auden have written freely about industrial landscapes, abandoned workings, or the airman's eye-view, but have not looked very closely at the way his style worked and what its implications were. One critic who did have an accurate understanding of the Audenesque, considered primarily as style, was G. Rostrevor Hamilton, whose short book, *The Tell-Tale Article* (1949), contains some acute if generally unsympathetic criticism of Auden. Hamilton drew attention to the heavy concentration of definite articles in Auden and other 20th-century poets, and supported his analysis with some comparative statistics. After working through an anthology of English poetry in several volumes Hamilton noted that from the 18th century to the early 20th the percentage of definite articles remained constant at about 6%, whereas in the volume devoted to modern poetry the percentage increased to 8½%, and rose to 10% each for Eliot and Auden. By contrast, in the poetry of the 16th and 17th centuries the use of the definite article averages 4%, while in a large sample of Donne it is as low as 2%. Hamilton argues that before the 18th century poetry was less concerned with reflection and description and more with enacting relationships, whether with God or man or woman, a mode that makes much less of the definite article. On the other hand, in 18th-century descriptive poetry the percentage is of modern proportions, 11% for Thomson and 9% for Crabbe.

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE points to the recognisable if not to the already known. It recalls an actually or possibly shared experience as well as, in its 20th-century uses, reflecting the preference of modernist poetics for the particular against the general. This, as Hamilton points out, may be based on a confusion, assuming that the opposition "particular/general" is the same as the opposition "sharp/vague", which does not necessarily follow. If Eliot and Auden each show a high percentage of definite articles their reasons for doing so are fundamentally different, even though Eliot exercised a potent influence on the young Auden:

But Eliot spoke the still unspoken word;
For gasworks and dried tubers I forsook
The clock at Grantchester, the English rook.
("Letter to Lord Byron", IV)

A line like "The simple act of the confused will" (from Poem XXVII in *Poems*, later "The Question" in *Collected Shorter Poems*, 1966), to which Hamilton draws attention, seems to be directly imitated from lines in Eliot's exactly contemporary *Ash Wednesday*, such as "The vanished power of the usual reign" or "The infirm glory of the positive hour." But this syntactical formation is rare in Auden and can be regarded as an early unassimilated influence. In Eliot the use of the definite article attempts, wistfully or urgently, to affirm the possibility of shared experiences and feelings recalled out of a fragmentary and chaotic past:

But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
Be remembered. . . .

The experiences thus recalled are personal but not remote or esoteric, and they seek an echo in our own pasts. Auden, by contrast, can present bafflingly private experiences in a similar way, so that the attempt to participate either recoils or leads one on to speculative fiction-making:

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A choice was killed by every childish illness,
The boiling tears among the hothouse plants,
The rigid promise fractured in the garden,
And the long aunts.
(Poem XXI, *Look, Stranger!*; "A Bride in the 30's", *CSP*).

The effect is, as Hamilton disapprovingly remarks, "as though an entire stranger were claiming our acquaintance." More often, however, Auden's use of the definite article arises from his sense of reality as known and charted and intelligible, where all elements are potentially at least capable of classification. To quote Hamilton once more: "We have seen the fondness of Eliot and Auden for the particular image, Eliot lighting up the fragments of what is, or is supposed to be, our common experience, while Auden indicates the marks by which we may recognise this or that type of person, and diagnose his disease." Auden's classifying tendency was familiar to his friends from the beginning. In Christopher Isherwood's fictionalised autobiography, *Lions and Shadows* (1938), where the young Auden appears as "Weston", the narrator reflects on a seaside holiday:

> "Suppose Weston were here, I thought, he would know the names of the different species of gull—and, by naming them, would dismiss them to their proper recognised unimportant place in the background of the poet's consciousness. . . ."

Another stylistic feature which Auden derived from Eliot but used with a significant difference is the bizarre or unexpected simile, as in the famous opening of "Prufrock": "When the evening is spread out against the sky/Like a patient etherised upon a table." In Eliot the simile is startling but not unintelligible; the underlying idea is of the cessation of consciousness, and we are invited to recognise the strangeness of a sensibility that interprets common experience in such a clinical way. There is, too, the conviction of the early modernist poet that we should think and feel differently about such a hallowed Romantic property as "evening." In Auden this impulse is systematically taken to the point of diminishing, even trivialising, large, potent concepts or images by comparing them to something everyday or banal. As, for instance, "Desire like a police-dog is unfastened" (Poem X, *Look, Stranger!*). Or again, consider the treatment of the moon in Poem II of *Look, Stranger!:*

Into the galleries she peers,
And blankly as an orphan stares
Upon the marvellous pictures.

In the revised version of this poem, "A Summer Night" *(CSP)*, the comparison is made even more reductive: "And blankly as a butcher stares." This stylistic device became more frequent as Auden developed during the 'thirties; it is rare in

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ROUTLEDGE

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Poems, moderately common in *Look, Stranger!* and a repetitive trick in *Another Time* (1940). "Brussels in Winter" from the last volume is representative, with four similes in fourteen lines: "Wandering the cold streets tangled like old string"; "The winter holds them like the Opera"; "Where isolated windows glow like farms"; "A phrase goes packed with meaning like a van." Such repetitions deaden whatever startling impact the device might have; it was, however, widely imitated, and became a major element in the collective Audenesque manner.

EQUALLY INFLUENTIAL was Auden's reliance on adjectives and adjectival phrases. These are sometimes scientific or clinical. But others—not all of them used frequently, but with a particular tactical emphasis—are partly descriptive, partly affective, with the exaggerated overtones of a familiar register in English middle-class speech: "wonderful", "marvellous," "lovely", "horrible", "appalling", "tremendous", "ridiculous", "doubtful", "enormous", "absurd." When applied to natural objects, or to unlikely human artefacts or institutions, the effect, as with the similes, is reductive, suggesting that there is nothing in reality that cannot be contained within the conceptual and verbal confines of the poet's world of discourse. The effect is similar to Weston's hypothetical classifying of seagulls as described by Isherwood. The prevalence of this device was adversely discussed by Karl Shapiro in *Essay on Rime*:

> *the tyrannical epithet*
> *Relies upon the adjective to produce*
> *The image; and no serious construction*
> *In rime can build upon the modifier.*
> *However matched and well-met are the words*
> *In such a phrase, the end-product is loose.*
> The high thin rare continuous worship of
> The self-absorbed *is an example which*
> *Outside of Auden has become the craze.*
> The tigerish blazer and the dove-like shoe
> *Is obviously the prototype for those*
> *Who speak diffusedly of* the childish night,
> Meaningless children, the albino crow,
> The riding flesh, *and* the unmurdered rose.

Shapiro overstates his case when he claims that "no serious construction . . . can build upon the modifier." A heavy reliance on adjectives and adjectival phrases was a noticeable feature of Yeats's mature style at its most impressive and one which certainly influenced Auden's own practice. It is sufficient to dip into Yeats's *Collected Poems* to find striking examples: "Many ingenious lovely things are gone" ("Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen"); "horrible green parrots", "the mad abstract dark" ("On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac"); "That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea" ("Byzantium"). And there are instances before the 20th century; one of Matthew Arnold's most plangent lines achieves its effect entirely by an accumulation of adjectives, and is proto-Audenesque in its combination of the affective and the descriptive: "The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea." Shapiro also seems to have missed the point about "The tigerish blazer and the dove-like shoe" (from Poem XXX of *Look, Stranger!*; "August for the People"), where the epithets are less arbitrary than he assumed. There is something of a witty conceit in describing the striped blazer and white tennis-shoes of the English holiday-maker in this way.

Nevertheless, Shapiro's discussion in *Essay on Rime* provides a generally acute description of the Audenesque. He notes Auden's increasing inclination towards personified abstractions:

> *Auden at first*
> *Used the abstraction as a metaphor,*
> *Concretely and with humour, but the figure,*
> *Full of the serum of old melancholy,*
> *Distended in its shell and burst. Thereafter*
> *The capital letter moved across his lines*
> *As ponderously as German nouns. . . .*

Again, Poem XXX of *Look, Stranger!* offers examples, though here the personification has something of the vigour and homeliness of Langland:

> *Greed showing shamelessly her naked money,*
> *And all Love's wondering eloquence debased*
> *To a collector's slang, Smartness in furs,*
> *And Beauty scratching miserably for food. . . .*

Shapiro goes on to show how certain key words of Auden's were generally adopted in the 'thirties and early 'forties:

> *Consider for instance the innocuous word,*
> *A common noun in this case,* history;
> *Though Auden keeps it such, by subtle change*
> *It gradually acquires the vast range*
> *Of signification of a word like* God.
> *Auden has written poems on* hell *and* law
> *But these thus far are innocent of corrupt*
> *Generalization; but* history *has achieved*
> *A currency in our rhetoric the like*
> *Of which I think must be unparalleled*
> *In rime. I won a wager once that opening*
> *A magazine of verse at random, one*
> *Could put his finger on this word, and used*
> *Moreover in some sense of mystery*
> *Which would defy interpretation. Surely*
> *An all-purpose abstraction is a form*
> *Dear to the tired mind that must malinger*
> *And precious to the talentless; how can*
> *The imitator well resist the coin*
> *Left over by the rich in art? Abused,*
> *Misused and uglified a thousandfold,*
> *The counter passes for the purest gold*
> *From poem to poem, until by reputation*
> *It has acquired the superstitious force*
> *Of the highbrow password.* History *is but one*
> *Of Auden's ill-starred words.* Luck *is another.*

Others, one might add, are "Love" and "Europe", though "History" was peculiarly obtrusive and

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influential. There is a striking antecedent in Eliot's "Gerontion" where "History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors." In Auden's own poetry it occurs in rhetorically significant places rather than with great statistical frequency. One instance is in the final lines of Poem XXX from *Look, Stranger!*

> *And all sway forward on the dangerous flood*
> *Of history, that never sleeps or dies,*
> *And, held one moment, burns the hand.*

Or, again, in the celebrated conclusion of "Spain" that Auden later came to regard with abhorrence: "History to the defeated/May say Alas but cannot help or pardon." As a concept, "History" has obvious Marxist implications, but as used in this personified way may have been suggested to Auden by Isherwood's friend Edward Upward, the "Chalmers" of *Lions and Shadows*. Upward's story, "Sunday", was written as early as 1931 and first published in *New Country* in 1933 together with Auden's poems. This didactic Marxist fable presents "History" as a recurring personification, with a characteristic listing of disparate items:

> History is here in the park, in the town. It is in the offices, the duplicators, the traffic, the nursemaids wheeling prams, the airmen, the aviary, the new viaduct over the valley. It was once in the castle on the cliff, in the sooty churches, in your mind; but it is abandoning them, leaving with them only the failing energy of desperation, going to live elsewhere.[1]

Upward seems to have been long preoccupied by "history." In *Lions and Shadows* Isherwood quotes a letter from Chalmers as a Cambridge undergraduate: "Beware of the daemon of history: it is merciless, it casually eats the flesh and heart and leaves the bleaching bones. History, history, hysteria."

IN ADDITION to Auden's use of the personified abstraction, sometimes given emphasis by the use of a possessive, as in "And love's best glasses reach/No fields but are his own", one can note his use of the vocative—"O love, the interest itself in thoughtless Heaven"—and of phrases in apposition, like "New styles of architecture, a change of heart", both noticeable features of the Audenesque. There is a different aspect of the 1930 *Poems*, which is Auden's abandonment of definite articles to produce an elliptical, "telegraphese" manner. This characteristic is at the opposite pole to Auden's frequent

[1] Edward Upward, *The Railway Accident and Other Stories* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 83. One might also remark on a verbal parallel between a phrase from Upward's story, "I might be sacked without a testimonial", and lines from Auden's "A Communist to Others" which also appeared in *New Country*: "'I shall be sacked without', you think/'A testimonial.'".

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use of the definite article, but as G. Rostrevor Hamilton remarked, "it is clear that Auden is *the*-conscious, and that, in playing with the English language, he often deliberately avoids the article, elsewhere so profuse in his work." In fact, the article-less manner became less noticeable after the 1930 volume. It was extensively copied by Cecil Day Lewis in *The Magnetic Mountain*, and occurs in Spender's poetry. But it was not widely imitated. In general the characteristics of the Audenesque in syntax and diction seem to me to be those described above: copious use of the definite article; unusual adjectives and adjectival phrases, and surprising similes, which have a reductive or trivialising effect; and personified abstractions. These features are functions of Auden's imaginative universe, which regarded reality as actually or potentially known and intelligible, without mysteries or uncertainty. Experience could be reduced to classifiable elements, as a necessary preliminary to diagnosis and prescription. It is in terms of this predisposition that Auden's early allegiance to Marxism and psychoanalysis can best be understood; both were attractive as techniques of explanation. Unifying all stylistic elements, and much less easily imitated, was Auden's characteristic tone, of calm certainty and total self-confidence. The opening of "Let History Be My Judge" is representative:

> *We made all possible preparations,*
> *Drew up a list of firms,*
> *Constantly revised our calculations*
> *And allotted the farms. . . .*

Lists and catalogues were a noticeable feature of Auden's world of intelligible extension, and so were maps and landscapes, not just as content but as structural elements. There is an apposite stanza in Part IV of "Letter to Lord Byron:"

> *The part can stand as symbol for the whole:*
> *So ruminating in these last few weeks,*
> *I see the map of all my youth unroll,*
> *The mental mountains and the psychic creeks,*
> *The towns of which the master never speaks,*
> *The various parishes and what they voted for,*
> *The colonies, their size, and what they're noted for.*

I WOULD ARGUE that Auden's best early poetry, where his feelings were most deeply engaged, has a geographical or topographical structure. This is apparent in the airman's-eye view of "Consider" in *Poems* and throughout *The Orators* (1933). John Fuller has suggested that Auden was influenced in his panoramic visions by Hardy's *The Dynasts*, but the possibility that he was also inspired by the actual experience of looking at the country from an aeroplane should not be discounted. There is a significant passage in Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies* (1930) which describes such a view, presenting much of the familiar content of Audenesque poetry:

> Nina looked down and saw inclined at an odd angle a horizon of straggling red suburb; arterial roads dotted with little cars; factories, some of them working, others empty and decaying; a disused canal; some distant hills sown with bungalows; wireless masts and overhead power cables; men and women were indiscernible except as tiny spots; they were marrying and shopping and making money and having children. The scene lurched and tilted again as the aeroplane struck a current of air. (Ch. 12).

In *Look, Stranger!*, which I take to be Auden's finest collection, there are several brilliant poems which combine a sweeping topographical vision and calm, assured movement. In some the vision is conceptual and map-like, in others it embodies Auden's devotion to certain English landscapes, usually of the Midlands and North, but also the Isle of Wight, a favoured resort of Auden, Isherwood and Upward. (Some of the best of these poems, like "August for the People", were perversely excluded from the *Collected Shorter Poems*.) Written at about the same time is the justly celebrated "Night Mail", originally a commentary for a documentary film about the Post Office. Here, too, we see a precise and affectionate sense of place, together with a witty list of the contents of the Night Mail:

> *Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,*
> *Letters with faces scrawled in the margin,*
> *Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,*
> *Letters to Scotland from the South of France,*
> *Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands.*

To my mind the most beautiful of all these revelations of the deep structure of Auden's imaginative world is the opening chorus of the verse play he wrote with Christopher Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935). All the qualities are here; the sense of a wide geographical context, narrowing down to a particular place; the listing of names as in a gazeteer; and the relaxed yet strong and flowing movement of the verse:

> *The Summer holds: upon its glittering lake*
> *Lie Europe and the islands; many rivers*
> *Wrinkling its surface like a ploughman's palm.*
> *Under the bellies of the grazing horses*
> *On the far side of posts and bridges*
> *The vigorous shadows dwindle; nothing wavers.*
> *Calm at this moment the Dutch sea so shallow*
> *That sunk St Pauls would ever show its golden cross*
> *And still the deep water that divides us still from Norway.*
> *We would show you at first an English village: You shall choose its location.*
> *Wherever your heart directs you most longingly to look; you are loving towards it:*
> *Whether north to Scots Gap and Bellingham where the black rams defy the panting engine:*
> *Or west to the Welsh Marches; to the lilting speech and the magicians' faces:*
> *Wherever you were a child or had your first affair*
> *There it stands amidst your darling scenery:*
> *A parish bounded by the wreckers' cliff: or meadows where browse the Shorthorn and the maplike Frisian*

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As at Trent Junction where the Soar comes gliding;
out of green Leicestershire to swell the ampler
current.

THE CENTRAL PARADOX about the Audenesque is that though by the end of the 'thirties it was disseminated throughout the English-speaking world, and can be called a collective style, its origins lay in one man's very personal, even idiosyncratic vision of reality. As, indeed, Shapiro acknowledged:

The personal development of an English poet
Became almost immediately the folly
Of all who wrote in verse.

The Audenesque would not be recognised as a collective style by Lucien Goldmann and his followers, since they understand such a style in neo-Hegelian terms as an impersonal manifestation of History, or, more precisely, as the articulation of the "world vision" of a dominant or emergent social class. Yet I do not think one can properly account for the Audenesque as a literary and cultural phenomenon by remaining within the traditional empirical categories of English literary history and saying that, not for the first time, a fashionable poet was widely imitated for a few years. I believe that, handled with care, the idea of "the spirit of the age", or more modestly, the "style of a period", does make sense and can help our understanding. My contention about Auden was that if he was widely and rapidly imitated, at least in his most evidently imitable stylistic and structural devices, it was because there was a general readiness to look at the world in Auden's categories. At a time of world economic depression there was something reassuring in Auden's calm demonstration, mediated as much by style as by content, that reality was intelligible, and could be studied like a map or a catalogue, or seen in temporal terms as an inexorable historical process. Hence the instant appeal of the classificatory vision, the reliance on definite articles and precise if unexpected adjectives, that placed and limited their subjects. Indeed, Auden's view of things was in a sense already in the air; witness the general admiration for the supposed virtues of the Soviet Five Year Plan. If Auden liked lists, so too did the practitioners of that primitive and simplistic kind of sociological enquiry called "Mass Observation", which tried to understand social behaviour by accumulating disparate observations about what given groups of people were doing at any one time. "Mass Observation" was sponsored by a poet and sociologist, Charles Madge, and its activities were sympathetically described in *New Verse*. One may compare the title of Geoffrey Grigson's first book of poems, *Several Observations* (1939); some of the early poems of Grigson

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and Kenneth Allott make use of lists in a way that recalls sociological investigation as well as Auden's models. There is a curious example in Kenneth Allott's "Signs", published in *New Verse* in 1936:

the letter to write
the seaside cruet
the magic flute

goldbearing quartz
the speeding fox
the last waltz

the rising gale
the flowered voile
the schoolbell. . .

the flying start
the dish-clout
the murdered heart.

There are other possible sources for this manner, quite independent of Auden's poetic practice. Some of the most famous and enduring popular songs of the 'thirties, for instance, like "You're the Tops" and "These Foolish Things", were made up of lists of random items, and there is a neat parody in Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* (1938):

The nightingale singing,
The postmen ringing,
Electric drill groaning,
Office telephoning,
Talk of our love.[2]

Auden himself wrote a brilliant exercise in this fashion in "Some say that love's a little boy", composed as a cabaret song for Hedli Anderson. This song shows Auden giving a highly personal turn to a public idiom which he did not originate but which was akin to his own way of responding to experience.

By 1936, when the Spanish Civil War broke out the Audenesque had become an established idiom, as we see in "Full Moon at Tierz: Before the Storming of Huesca" by the young Communist poet, John Cornford, written not long before his death in Spain. The first section contains the almost obligatory reference to "history":

And history forming in our hand's
Not plasticine but roaring sands,
Yet we must swing it to its final course.

The final section opens with a remarkably assured example of the Audenesque, with the characteristic geographical sweep, the reductive adjectives, the personifications, and the use of the vocative. It is nicely sustained for two stanzas, but in the third Cornford shifts into a more directly hortatory manner:

Now the same night falls over Germany
And the impartial beauty of the stars
Lights from the unfeeling sky
Oranienburg and freedom's crooked scars.
We can do nothing to ease that pain
But prove the agony was not in vain.

England is silent under the same moon,
From the Clydeside to the gutted pits of Wales.
The innocent mask conceals that soon
Here, too, our freedom's swaying in the scales.
O understand before too late
Freedom was never held without a fight.

Freedom is an easily spoken word
But facts are stubborn things. Here, too, in Spain
Our fight's not won till the workers of all the world
Stand by our guard on Huesca's plain
Swear that our dead fought not in vain,
Raise the red flag triumphantly
For Communism and for liberty.

THE MOST FAMOUS POEM to emerge from the Spanish Civil War, and one which seems to me the climax of the Audenesque was Auden's own "Spain." First published as a pamphlet in 1938, it was reprinted in a revised form in *Another Time*, but was finally dropped from the *Collected Shorter Poems*. Among other things, "Spain" is a catalogue poem where, as G. Rostrevor Hamilton showed, the percentage of definite articles is no less than 20%. Hamilton was altogether too dismissive about "Spain", calling it "a succession of calculated phrases without any backbone of verbs: the degeneration of syntax." Despite its accumulative method the poem does have, as C. K. Stead has pointed out,[3] a coherent structure, with the form: "Yesterday all the past"/"Tomorrow perhaps"/"But today the struggle." In "Spain" the geographical images are no longer the occasion of dispassionate surveys; the map has become the location for a violent, cataclysmic struggle:

On that arid square, that fragment nipped off from hot
Africa, soldered so crudely to inventive Europe,
On that tableland scored by rivers,
Our fever's menacing shapes are precise and alive.

"Spain" is an immensely interesting poem, where Auden tries to meet a new and urgent situation with a method that was better suited to the calm analysis and diagnosis of historical and social disorder than to facing so immediate a challenge. It has given rise to arguments about the nature of political poetry, and about such particular contentious points as the phrase, later amended,

[2] Part 2, Chapter 1. Greene's prose is often Audenesque, particularly in its indulgence in lists and striking similes, such as "Evil ran like malaria in his veins." See Richard Hoggart's discussion of this aspect of Greene's work in *Speaking To Each Other* (1970), II, pp. 46–48. Greene contributed an admiring note on Auden to *New Verse*, November 1937, remarking that "with the exception of *The Tower*, no volume of poetry has given me more excitement than *Look, Stranger!*"

[3] C. K. Stead, "Auden's 'Spain' ", *London Magazine*, March 1968.

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"the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder."[4] But in the end the interest seems to me more historical than literary, despite C. K. Stead's careful advocacy of the poem's merits. For all its local brilliance "Spain" looks strained and unconvincing and, perhaps, unconvinced; I find it a lesser achievement than many of the poems that Auden wrote earlier in the decade. Most significantly, "Spain" shows signs of self-imitation, of Auden becoming self-conscious in his employment of the Audenesque, possibly by feedback from his imitators.

Certainly "Spain" gave a powerful boost to the development of the Audenesque in the late 'thirties, particularly in the portentous references to History. Auden himself continued to write in the familiar idiom but, as some of the poems in *Another Time* indicate, in an increasingly insensitive manner. After his removal to America he adopted other voices and styles, with the protean ease that had always been characteristic of him. But it was not yet the end of the Audenesque chapter in English poetry.

JULIAN SYMONS HAS remarked that in the early 'thirties English culture was polarised between ideas of catastrophe and ideas of rebirth.[5] This polarity is evident in the poetry of Auden and his disciples, where images of derelict mills and factories and rusty sidings are set against others of pylons and aeroplanes and "new styles of architecture"; economic and industrial collapse contrasting with revolutionary hopes for the future, whether political or technological. The Audenesque, as a manner adapted to typification and analysis, enacted this polarity. The poet was like an aerial observer studying a landscape, pointing to disaster areas here and there, but also pointing elsewhere to new centres of civic and industrial growth. The advent of war, first in Spain in 1936 and then in the rest of Europe in 1939, destroyed this polarity. Catastrophe was present and total and the possibility of rebirth seemed more and more remote. After the outbreak of the Second World War and Auden's departure from England the Audenesque seemed to have lost its *raison d'être*. This, indeed, is the conventional assumption of literary history, where the "social realist" poetry of the 'thirties disappears and is replaced overnight by the "neo-romanticism" of the 'forties. If one looks at the poetry actually written during the Second World War the facts appear otherwise, for the Audenesque persisted, and servicemen or civilians found it an acceptable manner for the poetic registration of wartime experience. The implications of the style were, however, significantly altered. The use of definite articles and adjectives, instead of projecting a conceptual map of the known and knowable, indicated a nightmare landscape, or a concrete and detailed but alien and threatening environment. Again, references to History were as frequent as ever, but that entity was no longer seen as a god-like force, inexorably directing the course of human development; it seemed, now, the very embodiment of the irrational and the destructive:

Now I ask love from the stars in a time of hate
And, also, beg peace from the voice of the dead.
I cannot, however much I desire it, deny the past.
What, I say to the midsummer moon, can I do in this city,
And where can I walk to avoid the lies of history?
RUTHVEN TODD, "In Edinburgh 1940"

Reader, could his limbs be found
Here would lie a common man:
History inflicts no wound
But explodes what it began,
And with its enormous lust
For division splits the dust.
ROY FULLER, "Epitaph on a Bombing Victim"

[4] Notably by George Orwell in "Inside the Whale" *Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters*, I.
[5] Julian Symons, *The Thirties* (1960), p. 8.

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History rears before us like a wave,
Its high white head poised while we catch a breath,
While sun is torn from sky, and cowed or brave
We dare the disaster or the new adventure. . . .
HERBERT CORBY, "Poem on Joining the Royal Air Force, 1941"

O love! is it worth it? And are the dead rewarded
With a bearer bond on history's doubtful balance?
And is the loss redeemed by a sunset glory
A sweet transfusion of blood to a new-born world?

No, it will never be worth it, nor the loss redeemed.
RANDALL SWINGLER, "Briefing for Invasion"

The map, which in the 'thirties was a reassuring image of order and coherence, acquired a deceptive or sinister character:

A map of the world is on the wall: its lying
Order and compression shadow these bent heads.
Here we try to preserve communications;
The map mocks us with dangerous blues and reds.
ROY FULLER, "Y.M.C.A. Writing Room"

Time may have answers but the map is here.
Now is the future that I never wished to see.
I was quite happy dreaming and had no fear:
But now, from the map, a gun is aimed at me.
RUTHVEN TODD, "It was Easier"

Keith Douglas directed the Audenesque airman's-eyeview at a desert battlefield:

Perched on a great fall of air
a pilot or angel looking down
on some eccentric chart, the plain
dotted with the useless furniture
discerns crouching on the sand vehicles
squashed dead or still entire, stunned
like beetles: scattered wingcases and
legs, heads, show when the haze settles.
"Landscape with Figures"

In "The Middle of a War", Roy Fuller provides a memorable Audenesque line that deflates a large historical vision with a reductive adjective and simile, "The ridiculous empires break like biscuits."

THE WARTIME PERSISTENCE of the Audenesque was inevitably tenuous, since it was a manner sustained at two removes from its source. It was a continuation, in totally changed circumstances, of the collective idiom of the 'thirties, itself a reflection of the personal mannerisms of one poet. Yet the Audenesque was still viable by the end of the war, as we see from an early poem by a writer who was later to become a dominant presence on the post-war literary scene:

Then if history had a choice, he would point his cameras
Oh yes anywhere but here, any time but now;
But this is given us as the end of something
Important, something we must try to remember;
No music or kisses we want attend the fade-out,
Only a same sky or an embarrassing room,
Lust for something and a lust for no one,
Aloneness of crowds, infidelity, love's torture.
KINGSLEY AMIS, "Belgian Winter"

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Thereafter the Audenesque faded, though some of its stylistic features—particularly the extensive use of definite articles, and arresting adjectives and similes—were absorbed into the resources in diction or syntax of later poets. What became quite inaccessible were those characteristics that were closest to Auden's own early vision of reality, the calm, confident, categorising manner, and the capacity for assured generalisation expressing itself in terms of history or geography. By the early 'fifties it had all come to seem very remote:

> *The Devil for a joke*
> *Might carve his own initials on our desk,*
> *And yet we'd miss the point because he spoke*
> *An idiom too dated, Audenesque.*
> DONALD DAVIE, "Remembering the Thirties"

But what looks merely dated after twenty years can be worth serious historical enquiry after forty years. One significant aspect of the triumph of the Audenesque in the late 'thirties is now apparent. It was the last time that any British poet was to have such a global influence on poetry in English. Thereafter the course of British and American poetry diverged sharply, so that now, as is often remarked, there are two quite separate poetic traditions with nothing in common. In a more theoretical way, a study of the Audenesque may contribute something to current discussions of the sociology of literature. It suggests that whereas the study of stylistic change in isolation from larger social and cultural factors is likely to be arid and unilluminating, simplistic attempts to relate literature and society are equally unhelpful. English critics and literary historians readily assume that a style spreads simply because an influential writer has imitators, whereas current Continental theorists are inclined to regard style as an impersonal emanation of a "world vision" or the spirit of the age. In my reading, both factors are necessary; Auden, as a very individual genius, devised, without intending to, a code in which other, less talented poets could express their fears and anxieties and hopes through a period of sustained historical crisis. If their messages are often remarkably similar, that is partly, no doubt, because of the conditioning nature of the code, and partly because of the collective nature of their preoccupations.

Manner and Mannerism

Auden, Betjeman, Dunn—By ANTHONY THWAITE

WHEN, A LITTLE over a year ago, I published a memorial piece in ENCOUNTER "On Auden's Death", I was at pains to put special stress on the peculiar (and, it seemed to me, not sufficiently noticed) merits of his later poems. Of course I hadn't then seen most of the poems that make up *Thank You, Fog*,[1] a collection that Auden had already put together and given its title before he died. If I had, I hope I would have had the charity (and sense of perspective) not to make much of the mixture of depression and irritation which descended on me when I read them. The Auden whose genius stretched over forty-odd years of dazzling illumination and memorable speech isn't destroyed by one bad book.

But it *is* a bad book, and it's a pity that the poems from it will presumably conclude the massive *Collected Poems* which Auden's literary executor, Edward Mendelson, is now editing. Auden shouldn't have vanished from sight with such trivial, shrugging, banal stuff as his final words:

> *Envy we must those bards who compose in Italian or German:*
> *Apposite Feminine Rhymes give them no bother at all.*
> *We, though, thanks to a Tongue deprived of so many inflexions.*
> *Can very easily turn Nouns, if we wish, into Verbs.*

The trick to which Auden playfully referred became more and more a tic, a maddening mannerism, whereby parts of speech were juggled and swapped. In itself this doesn't matter much; nor does the ransacking of recondite vocabulary, or the neologising—there is less of this in *Thank You, Fog*, in fact, than in either of the books that went before it. What is hardest to take is the slack cosiness, sometimes signalled by all those supercilious capital letters (Common Sense, Myths of Being, Personal Pronouns, Old Ones, Hungry Thirties, Ideal Friend, Dangerous Quest, My Personal City, You, Her, We, etc.), sometimes archly colloquial (freaked out of, that's a stumper, a real shame, such fun). Padded out with two lyrics from an aborted musical about Don Quixote and a camped-up masque written in collaboration with Chester Kallman, *Thank You, Fog* is a sad end

[1] *Thank You, Fog*. By W. H. AUDEN. Faber, £1.75.

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to a splendid career. Indeed, to pretend otherwise is an insult to a great poet.

BETJEMAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, against all the gibes and smirks, goes on doing his own parodiable but inimitable thing, and as well as ever. *A Nip in the Air*[2] has examples of most of his considerable range, from nostalgic celebrations and laments in brisk couplets, hymnodic stanzas and Charles Tennyson Turner-like sonnets, to satirical jollities about PROs and developers, *Daily Telegraph*-reading exiles in Spain, and the Porkers:

> *Loud talk of meets and marriages*
> *And tax-evasion's heard*
> *In many first-class carriages*
> *While servants travel third.*
> *"My dear, I have to spoil them too—*
> *Or who would do the chores?*
> *Well, here we are at Waterloo,*
> *I'll drop you at the Stores."*

The "occasional" pieces, adjuncts of the Laureateship, have their felicities as well as their small embarrassments: "A Ballad of the Investiture 1969" is considerably better than anything that, say, Tennyson did in this area. The cancer-and-crematorium poems ("And little puffs of smoke without a sound/Show what we loved dissolving in the skies") are as bleak and direct as before. The most original departure is "Shattered Image", a long dramatic narrative, written in the ambling blank verse of "Summoned by Bells", about a pederast who finds himself ostracised by friends and employers when a charge comes up. In "The Last Laugh", Betjeman ruefully says: "I made hay while the sun shone. /My work sold." His popularity is clearly both a burden and a delight to him, as well as being a surprise. What must be hard to take is the realisation that most of the serious literary world is utterly dismissive and condescending. Still, Betjeman gets his own back: Rex (the accused in "Shattered Image") lives at "One-seven Alvarez Cloister, Double-you-one."

ONE OF THE POEMS in *Love or Nothing*,[3] "Ars Poetica", takes a marvellous sentence from Randall Jarrell ("This poem looks as if it had been written by a typewriter on a typewriter") and uses it as a lever into a droll fantasy about "The squalid hutch of the iambic line" where the Muses hang out. "The familiar and the ordinary" —those touchstones of Douglas Dunn's first book, *Terry Street*—have become on the whole

[2] *A Nip in the Air*. By JOHN BETJEMAN. John Murray, £1.50.

[3] *Love or Nothing*. By DOUGLAS DUNN. Faber, £1.25.

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the merest reference points: he has become a writer of fictions, a sardonic fantasist rather than a melancholy reporter, a wearer of disguises. Renfrewshire and Hull are places of the mind, or stage-sets which Dunn can re-design and slot in at will. Yet this expansion into worlds untethered to documentary hasn't meant that his forms and language have become indiscriminate; the diction is more scrupulous and fastidious than ever, the cadences shifting but almost always carefully poised and adjusted. Here and there (as with Dunn's second book, *The Happier Life*) I was in fact disconcerted by a dandified obscurity which is the price you have to pay, I suppose, for these fictive ambitions: I have a notion that Dunn ought to stop reading the French Symbolists now, having learned what he can from them. What Arthur Symons called the "fatal evasiveness" of Laforgue can become a mannerism as pervasive, and almost as crippling, as Auden's lexical tricks. But Dunn is such a serious and inventive poet, and by now so accomplished, that advice handed down like this has probably already been overtaken by some new shift or turn. Wherever the Muses hang out, he has their number.

Demoralising Dickens

By Laurence Lerner

MORALLY CONCERNED CRITICS have had a lot to say about Dickens recently, and John Carey's book is intended as a counterblast.[1] He has a low opinion of Dyson, Lucas, Daleski, the Leavises, and several others, at whom he aims passing blows for reducing Dickens' novels to moral platitudes, and for frequently misreading them in their eagerness to impose on them a consistent message and a central moral or social concern. For Mr Carey, what matters about Dickens is his imagination: led by that, he writes like a genius, and doesn't care tuppence if he contradicts what he said in his last book, or earlier in the same book. Led by respectability, conscience and a wish to advance virtue, he writes in pious clichés. The result is a radical contradiction between Dickens' imagination and his morality: he loved riot, murder and savagery, and when—as he often did—he tried to make the violence moral, his writing deteriorated. Mr Carey describes the added morality, quite bluntly, as hypocritical. There are even deep contradictions within Dickens' imagination, for as well as violence he loved neatness and order, and is always singing the praises of clerks who (like Nicholas Nickleby) "dot all their small i's and cross every t as they write it." Here there is yet another contradiction, with the enlightened Dickens who hated pedantry, red tape and the Circumlocution Office. For Mr Carey, Dickens' imagination is a vast, fertile, wildly exciting and deeply irresponsible set of contradictions.

I had better say at once that on virtually every particular disagreement over how to interpret a Dickens novel, it is quite clear to me that Mr Carey is right and the moralising critics are wrong. As a critic, Carey has all the virtues we associate with Oxford: he knows his Dickens backwards, he writes forcefully and clearly, in a style totally free from jargon and pretentiousness, and he hates cant. Anyone who's been feeling bogged down lately by neo-Marxism or *la nouvelle critique* should read this book, just to reassure himself that good sense and honesty are not dead. If for no other reason than that, this is one of the best critical books I have read for a long time, and I shall certainly read—indeed buy—Mr Carey's next. But. . . .

Yes of course there's a but, and I am quite sincere when I say that the seriousness of the but is a tribute to the excellence of the book. In fact, there are really two buts, though they are closely connected. First, there are the contradictions in Carey. For all the gusto with which he dismisses the moralisers, he can be pretty moral himself. This is clearest in the chapter on children, which happens to be the one that makes most use of comparisons with other writers. It quotes a passage from Sartre on how the child perceives adults by smell, and remarks "Dickens is never as good on sex-smells as this"; then a passage from Gorky, whose account of the child's response to death he considers "more accurate even than Dickens' best"; then, later, compares Mr Toodle at tea, surrounded by his hungry children, with Maheu at tea in *Germinal*, and finds Zola more honest and more committed, according his characters the dignity of human beings, introducing every detail for a reason: "he wants to draw

[1] *The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens' Imagination.* By JOHN CAREY. Faber, £3.25.

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attention to the cramped housing conditions his miners have to endure." Dickens in contrast reduces his family frictions to pantomime affairs.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED here to the enthusiasm that glowed through Mr Carey's early chapters and led him to begin by telling us that Dickens is infinitely greater than his critics, and that "critics can, with unusual ease, appear intelligent at his expense"? So there is a social intelligence locked up in Carey after all, and the point it makes, though a very good one, also has a certain ease about it. Of course Zola's imagination is more humane than Dickens', and more genuinely engaged with the issues of his time—that was the point of Carey's opening chapters, and now suddenly it has become an objection to Dickens. "The main subject of the following chapters," he began by telling us, "will not be Dickens' morals, social criticism or alleged inferiority to George Eliot, but the workings of his imagination." Now we are back in a type of criticism by which Dickens is manifestly inferior to George Eliot.

I don't think this is an accident. If Mr Carey had been able to stay consistent, he would in some ways have been a lesser man. George Eliot and Dickens, our two greatest novelists, happen to illustrate, by their contrast, a crucial difference between two kinds of writer, the one whose imagination is morally controlled, and the essentially anarchic imagination, and it would be a narrow critic who responded to only one of them. But to explore the relation between the two leads us into theoretical concerns, and this leads me to my central comment on Mr Carey's book: the way it so often reaches the threshold of theoretical questions, which it then does not enter.

I would make this point even if Mr Carey had never written the chapter on children, for it is important in itself, not just because it is thrown up by his contradictions. Not all critics, of course, have a taste for literary theory—yet the greatest must have, and I suppose it is inevitable that any really perceptive and lucid critical study must reach this threshold and then, if it turns back, disappoint.

IF THE IMAGINATION is morally anarchic, why is it valuable? Perhaps Mr Carey could answer by quoting, and say (as he does) that it led Dickens to this astonishing linguistic inventiveness. But why are metaphors so valuable, if they flout our other values? Sooner or later, we are led to formulate a criterion of energy, of universal sympathy, of a delight in evil that does not care about it being evil—of Negative Capability, in fact, of the power that takes as much delight in

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conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. The delight which Shakespeare took in creating Iago has a good deal in common with Dickens' delight in creating Pecksniff, and Shakespeare knew, as much as Dickens did, that what Iago represents is wicked (or let us take a term from the critics Mr Carey dislikes, and say "anti-life"). No doubt Shakespeare showed this better than Dickens did, but the problem he tackled was the same—how to reconcile our imaginative identification with Edmund or Iago with our perception of what their actions really mean, in terms of our normal human values. When Dickens tries to show this he writes badly, but to dismiss his effort as hypocritical, as Mr Carey does, is to imply that he need not have made it, that there was no problem. If there is no such problem, there can be no George Eliot and no Zola.

And there is another way too in which I find Mr Carey's conception of literature wanting. His eagerness to drive a wedge between Dickens' creative energy and his moralising leads him sometimes, to distrust the total effect—and especially in those cases where Dickens seems to have come closest to achieving a synthesis. The most striking examples come from *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend*. Mr Carey shows a lively and subtle appreciation of Wemmick and his wonderful suburban home with moat and drawbridge and hot buttered toast—Dickens' elaboration of the view that every Englishman's house is his castle. It is all so cosy, so delightful—and so limited. As we think about it, and relate it to other parts of the book, the limitations loom ever more clearly. Nothing in Wemmick's house offers any resistance to what he does during the day in Jaggers' office; the gun he fires each evening for fun "plainly recalls the warning gun . . . which was fired from the prison ships when a convict escaped." And so on, until Mr Carey stops himself guiltily: "Perhaps, though, we are being too hopeful, or too allegoric, in suggesting such a salutary 'meaning' for Wemmick's castle. There is no hint of adverse criticism from Dickens."

In the case of *Our Mutual Friend*, the point concerns the dust-heap. Mr Carey is very scornful of the interpretation that equates money with dirt, and has no difficulty in showing that Dickens loved money, that he shows its value in the way he rewards his good characters with it, and that dust-heaps were for him fascinating and not disgusting. Now surely both these discussions, in their very rightness, are centrally deficient; rejecting a moral interpretation which Dickens did not hold, he simply moves to denying its presence altogether. Both Wemmick's castle and Boffin's dust-heap are rich, resonant and ambivalent. It is obvious that *Our Mutual Friend*, on the

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most literal level, *does* assert that money is dirt, just as the story of Bella and Boffin is meant to show that money corrupts; Mr Carey's counter-arguments are equally true, and are overlooked by the critics he attacks, but the conclusion should surely be that the experience of *Our Mutual Friend* is one of interacting contradictions. There is no need to fear we are being "too hopeful" in seeing the limitations of Wemmick's castle just because Dickens never *says* that it's limited, when the experience of reading the novel results in so rich an ambivalence. Why should our hopefulness see more resonances than Dickens' own imagination?

Mr Carey's use of material from outside the novels, his interest in Dickens the man, is in many ways exemplary, and any reader will learn a great deal from his handling of it. But in the end, he has failed, at crucial moments, to put it behind him, and to trust the tale.

Taking Possession

New Fiction—By JONATHAN RABAN

MODERN WRITING is afflicted by a pathological anxiety about the problem of ownership. To snare the world in a sentence is, after all, to take out a title-deed on it; yet the world which most 20th-century writers live in is patently not one which can be owned. More to the point is its knotty independence—its capacity to resist the metaphors by which the writer tries to make it his own.

This is an argument which was very thoroughly rehearsed in the 18th century. The landscape of Pope's "Windsor Forest", for instance, yields itself as willingly to the sentence as Carew's trout had offered themselves up to the sweet toilette of Meunière sauce in his ironic homage to Saxham:

> *The scaly herd more pleasure took,*
> *Bath'd in thy dish, than in the brook. . . .*

Pope's waving groves only properly exist in the phrases which articulate them; and the parks and grottoes of Augustan poetry all seem to ache for the delightful joke of the couplet—the sentence in its most boldly possessive form—which, by taking possession of them, liberates them into meaning.

By Crabbe's time, the claims of the couplet had become false; and Crabbe's odd modernness comes largely from his recognition that he was writing in a form which was an imposition on experience—that, try as he would, the world was going to bulge and leak around the edges of the line.

> *"Describe the Borough"—though our idle tribe*
> *May love description, can we so describe,*
> *That you shall fairly streets and buildings trace,*
> *And all that gives distinction to a place?*
> *This cannot be. . . .*

Crabbe's landscape—like his language—is an Augustan one which has got out of control; no longer possessible, it resists the writer, tripping him up on snags which won't fit into rhyme.

> *We prune our hedges, prime our slender trees,*
> *And nothing looks untutor'd and at ease;*
> *On the wide heath, or in the flow'ry vale,*
> *We scent the vapours of the sea-born gale;*
> *Broad-beaten paths lead on from stile to stile,*
> *And sewers from streets the road-side banks defile;*
> *Our guarded fields a sense of danger show,*
> *Where garden-crops with corn and clover grow. . . .*

With this passage, we're right on the edge of those helpless inventories in which the realist novelists of the 19th century used to enjoy drowning themselves; the magnificent arrogance of the sentence giving way to the threadbare honesty of the tradesman's catalogue.

From Pope and Crabbe to Nadine Gordimer's latest novel, *The Conservationist*,[1] may seem a wild pedantic leap. But apparently the 18th century is still alive and well and living in South Africa; and Miss Gordimer has run into some late-18th-century problems with her prose. Her conservationist is a divorced white businessman called Mehring who owns a farm which he lives on at weekends and which he's content to run as a tax-deductible loss. This chunk of Africa is his private empire, his country manor. And like a squire from an earlier age, he sits easily on the freedoms which come with owning property. His money—like the money which financed the building of Georgian country houses and their parks—comes from elsewhere; in the city, he's a pig-iron millionaire. His cattle and his fields of lucerne are there to decorate the landscape, not to provide a living. The Blacks and Asians who attend him do so more by deference to a notion of natural law than by commitment to any sort of social or economic contract. When Mehring encounters radicalism he perceives it merely as eccentricity: his mistress's left-wing attitudes are seen on a

[1] *The Conservationist*. By NADINE GORDIMER. Cape, £2.75

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level with her failure to keep house properly; his teenage son's homosexuality and the peace sign on his knapsack are written off as evidence of tedious adolescent fashionability. Yet Miss Gordimer never allows us to regard Mehring as a reactionary hyena: he is simply of his time, of his place—and if by English standards he is two hundred years too late, in South Africa he is bang up to date with his flight schedules, lightweight suits and casual, lightly-worn lust for young things with butterflies embroidered on the buttocks of their jeans.

THE CONSERVATIONIST is a tremendous imaginative stocktaking of Mehring and his estate; and to write the book Miss Gordimer has had to reconstruct, piece by piece, a sensibility, even a historical consciousness, quite alien from her own. She has taken on Mehring's contemptuous, powerful sexuality and has felt the world through the stirrings of his genitals as well as simply watched it through his eyes. On this level alone, there has been no novel with which to compare it since Angus Wilson's *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot*. She writes about being a man with more curiosity, passion and intelligence than any man could bring to the subject. But this sexual transposition is only the springboard for an amazing and dangerous dive into the mirrorlike otherness of Africa. As a liberal herself (it wasn't by accident that the title of that brilliant short novel, *The Late Bourgeois World*, came from Ernst Fischer's *The Necessity of Art*) she has entered imaginatively into the state of mind which takes *apartheid* for granted as a moral good. As a white, she has adopted the resigned, bovine perspectives of Mehring's "boys," their wives and children—people who are as much part of Mehring himself as his other goods and chattels. As a writer, she has created a rich prose—not a satiric idiom—for a mind accustomed to thinking of any kind of art or extended introspection as being a poor substitute for the material blessings of life.

This prose is her triumph; but it comes close to being her undoing too. The main drive of the writing through the book is its acquisitiveness; it sucks in details like a Hoover. A field, a farmyard, a room, a desert, a continent . . . everything is appropriated as soon as looked at. Nor is it the style of an inventory. It is a luscious, crowded prose, rhythmical and rich in metaphor. Here is Mehring on his farm—

> As the air plunges in him, his gaze widens and sweeps: down along the river the willows have gone blond, not yet at their palest, combed out into bare strands, but still, lightly spattered and delicately streaked with yellow leaves. Around them is a slight smudgy ambience, a mauvish-smoky blend between their outline and the bright air. . . .

—and on his mistress—

> She shone, on wine; not the way a woman has a shiny nose, but like one of those satiny stone eggs, striped brown agate that come from the desert back where he was a child: warmed in armpit or groin, breathed on by the body's heat, when the bloom was rubbed off again against the leg of his khaki shorts a graining of alluvial light would come up beneath the glassy brown skin. . . .

Both these passages are only a hair's breadth away from the language of the classy menu; but that proximity is carefully calculated. Mehring's sensuality, his eye, his entire emotional apparatus, are those of the thoroughbred *bon viveur*; the world has been arranged for his delectation, and he savours landscapes and people with the indiscriminate discrimination of someone tasting rare clarets over a spittoon.

SIMILES BREED in his mind like a disease. The object in view leads him to thinking of another and another and another; he is beset by a lazy attentiveness which often seems in danger of registering *everything*. He takes a shower, and: "The chromium snake and rose, *which may be secured in a bracket on the wall above the bath or held in the hand*, are in brilliant contrast to the chipped tiles decorated with peeling Bambi transfers which were the previous owners' level of bathroom luxury" (my italics). How did this fragment from the manufacturer's catalogue get into the sentence? Because it could not be kept out—because Mehring's attention to his own property is so automatic that it will not be budged by the requirements of narrative or by a sense of scale.

The result is a profound mental disproportion. Midway through the book (in a section first published in ENCOUNTER, July 1974), Mehring takes a plane flight to Namibia, and looks down at the land through a porthole.

> Golden reclining nudes of the desert.
> Montego Bay. Sahara. Kalahari. Namib.
> . . . Sometimes it's a day flight, clear, and even at thirty thousand feet you can squint down from a window-seat at long intervals and see it there, soft lap after lap of sand, stones, stones in sand, the infinite wreckage not of a city or a civilisation but the home that is the earth itself. . . .

Very fine, but on the next page, Mehring's fingers have found the bare thigh of the doughy girl in the seat next to him. He begins to masturbate her; she is complaisant. His exploring finger undertakes a journey as long and jungled as Livingstone's—and the Namibian desert turns out to have been only an aperitif to the much richer fare of feeling up strangers on aeroplanes.

Miss Gordimer is, of course, out to shake the complacency of Mehring's smoothly omnivorous prose. She is endlessly putting objects in his way—

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scraps of plastic sheeting, bus stops with queues of lounging blacks. She starts the book with a drought in which hippopotami are aborting their foetuses, and ends it with a rainstorm which washes car drivers off the face of the earth. She tries accidents and cataclysms. At the end, she kills Mehring off, and his death is small, squalid and meaningless.

The extraordinary thing is that Mehring is so complete and powerful a fictional character that he survives all of Miss Gordimer's efforts to trip him up. He only stops his prose when his brains are blown out. And he, not Miss Gordimer, finally dominates the novel. We are supposed to respond to the tragicomedy of his arrogant attempt to own Africa; as it is, we just watch him owning it as confidently as any 18th-century squire. His affairs turn into tolerable peccadillos; his racial attitudes are easily ascribable to customs of the country. When I came to the end of the book, at once puzzled and wholly persuaded, I wondered if Miss Gordimer felt like Frankenstein.

BERYL BAINBRIDGE'S tenure on her world is indisputable. But it's a small, dry place, fenced off like a compound behind barbed wire and vigilantly patrolled by the novelist, who knows rather too well how to keep all her characters within bounds. *The Bottle Factory Outing*[2] is as near to a perfect novel as I've read for a long time. It has both the simplicity and the savagery of one of the nastier folk ballads, along with the ballad's restricted range and the linguistic certainty which comes from working with a foreshortened vocabulary as if it were an eight-note scale.

Mr Paganotti's bottle factory and the apartment house where Brenda and Freda share a cruddy bedsitter are connected by a nameless, blighted urban road. On the evidence of a few surface details, the room might be in Holloway, the factory in Camden Town. But really they exist just beyond the fringe of any known place or society, these boltholes for people as disconnected as shellshock cases. Brenda, who once took music lessons and lived in a semi, Freda, who is romantic and weighs sixteen stone, Patrick, the Irishman with cuts on his face and hands from his nightly brawls in the pub, and the chattering Italian immigrants, floating in the vacuum between the peasantry and the industrial working class, are all vague, forgetful, superstitious and empty-headed. If memory is what distinguishes the human from the animal, they are barely human. They live in the void of a present tense which is constantly eclipsing everything that went before. Their own pasts are as mysterious and remote to them as legends. They drift between sentimentality and a cruelty which they exercise as innocently as a dog chewing a guinea pig. When one of them kills another, they dispose of the corpse secretly and reverently, sending it away in a barrel wreathed with plastic flowers that came as free gifts with soapflake packets.

Miss Bainbridge's prose style is so exactly attuned to the dislocated mental world of her characters that the novelist is able to pass herself off more as an eavesdropper than as an artificer. It is a kind of writing in which world and word are utterly of a piece.

> At night when they prepared for bed Freda removed all her clothes and lay like a great fretful baby, majestically dimpled and curved. Brenda wore her pyjamas and her underwear and a tweed coat—that was the difference between them. Brenda said it was on account of nearly being frozen to death in Ramsbottom, but it wasn't really that. Above the bed Freda had hung a photograph of an old man sitting on a stool with a stern expression on his face. She said it was her grandfather, but it wasn't. Brenda had secretly scratched her initials on the leg of the chair nearest the window, just to prove this one was hers when the other fell apart due to Freda's impressive weight. The cooker was on the first floor, and there was a bathroom up a little flight of stairs and

[2] *The Bottle Factory Outing*. By BERYL BAINBRIDGE. Duckworth £2.35

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> a window on the landing bordered with little panes of stained glass. Freda thought it was beautiful. When she chose, the washing on the line, the fragments of tree and brick, were tinted pink and gold. Brenda, avoiding the coloured squares, saw only a back yard grey with soot and a stunted rambling rose that never bloomed sprawled against the crumbling surface of the wall. She felt it was unwise to see things as other than they were.

Living in this prose is like suffering from an optical deficiency which causes everything less than six feet away to be magnified, frighteningly sharp, and everything beyond that to congeal into an impenetrable grey fuzz. Tables, chairs, clothes, kitchen utensils, faces are all enormous and vivid, and they form the effective boundaries of the knowable world. The rest—like the backyard beyond the window—is unreliable, a territory of illusion and rumour intermitted with recognisable facts like soot and washing lines.

It's a style which accepts the extraordinary as normal. A kettle boils. Someone gets strangled. The lavatory cistern breaks down. There are neither causes for events, nor any particular expectations; things just happen. Immediately after the murder, the most notable occurrence is that the driver of the tour bus in the Windsor Safari Park turns out to be wearing orange sandals and striped socks. Brenda and Freda are even worse than Mehring at making distinctions between objects of different proportions.

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But to achieve this accuracy, control and perfect pitch, Miss Bainbridge has had to play Procrustes. One might say that her characters are simply the sort of people who are untroubled by thoughts, who lack any sense of their own cultural depth and identity, and who are capable of only the most vestigial feelings, and leave it at that. Or one might accuse Miss Bainbridge of depriving them of the right to think and feel in order to construct a world simple enough to be contained by that pure, lucid but underprivileged prose. A great deal in *The Bottle Factory Outing* can only excite unqualified admiration; but there is, finally and nigglingly, something about it which is as self-enclosed and remote as a monastic cell.

STANLEY ELKIN'S CHARACTERS suffer from an interesting variety of the same basic disease. The *Eligible Men*[3] are word kings. They build up glittering verbal palaces around themselves, in cascading rhetorical monologues, in dreams, in deep wordy caverns of introspection. Their worlds are perfected right down to the final bauble on the last minaret. Then the crunch comes. They discover that no one else is living there but them. The brilliant talker is the proprietor and sole inhabitant of his universe; and he might as well be adrift in outer space. His fatal proficiency in language has taken him clean out of the world of other people.

This is the central theme of the three short novels that make up the book; one about a talking bailbondsman, one about a dreaming Kennedy-Plimpton playboy, and one about an introspective lecturer on the lunch-party circuit. Elkin has perfected a form of garrulous baroque, a sort of solipsist's Scrabble. Like grotesque illustrations to a theory of Chomskian linguistics, his characters seem to have been born with outsize generative grammars installed inside their craniums.

Alexander Main, the bailbondsman, known in Cincinnati as "Phoenician," is, he boasts, renowned in the city for his smart dialogue, but he hasn't had a conversation since his wife died. Down telephones, through taxi grilles, across office desks and over lunch-parlour counters, he rants on about the universe, and ends up by terrorising his clerk (for whom he has bought a high stool and a quill pen so that he can look like a "real clerk" out of Charles Dickens) in a hotel room.

> "And for every black hole there's a *white* hole. That's what Hjellming thinks, how he accounts for the quasars. Are you reading me, Crainpool? The universes are leaking to each other. There's this

[3] *Eligible Men.* By STANLEY ELKIN, Gollancz, £3.50

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transfusion of law in the sky. I'm honest, I'm an honest man. Upright and respectable here in this universe I inhabit. I'm honest, but the fucking laws are leaking, the physical constants bleeding into each other like madras. God Himself nothing but a slow leak, some holy puncture, Nature's and reality's sacred flat. Matter and anti-matter. Inside our universe is another. Dig? Chinese boxes of universes. When I kill you in your room here tonight, maybe that's virtue next-door. You think?"

"Why? Please, Mr Main, *why*?"

"Shut up about why. I don't *know* why!"

Crainpool changes his tactics. He stops whining and becomes almost angry. "You always have to have the last word," he says. "You always have to do things big, don't you? Big shot. You'd kill me for nothing, for the sake of your style."

"My style? Nah."

But he would. Given a style like that, bullets are superfluous; and Elkin's inspired gasbags write and talk themselves out of the realm of human relations. Ashenden, the scrupulous New England aristocrat, has a sensibility so fine he cannot bring himself to violate his friends' wives; he wanders out of an English country house into a painting by Edward Hicks and into the embrace of an enormous she-bear whom he has to satisfy in coitus. The ordinary laws of physics and human conduct just don't apply to these cursed language-using animals, and that is their tragedy.

For the power of Elkin's writing lies in his capacity to move smoothly from the real into the fantastic and back again. His characters, no matter how wild their imaginative and linguistic flights, are always rooted in the ordinary. He can create a city street, or a hideous housing complex for the retired middle class (in *The Condominium*, the best novella of all), as ably as any devout realist. And around the terrifying limitlessness of characters who have not learned that language has its limits, he has moulded a sad, sour, entirely satisfying fiction.

My Friend Havelock Ellis

My first formal lesson on sex I owe
To my mother. Those faded books she bought
At the auction—sixpence the dozen, tied
With a rough string—hid one volume more
Than she bargained for.
For months I harboured him, forbidden one,
Under the green song sheets from *Ireland's Own*.

He never made the bookshelf, even wrapped
In a brown jacket. Consulted daily
Under clumps of trees beyond the hedge
That foiled the window's eye, his lectures turned
Often on mysteries.
I questioned him again until content
He'd yielded all, tutor and confidant.

Even in those days I knew at heart
How much he bored me. The tadpole-diagrams
He labelled Sperm, and cross-sections of organs
Like the cuts in butchers' windows, were less
Than living.
Still I intoned with a determined bliss
Words like fallopian, ovum, uterus.

The real joy was having such a friend,
Sure to be frowned on were his presence known.
He fed my independence, served a need
The set-texts neglected. Nothing left then
But to discard him;
Time for fresh schooling, lessons to begin
In the arms of my new friend, Rosita Quinn.

Frank Ormsby

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

A Reply to Mark Abrams

Can You Poll Values?

MARK ABRAMS' article "Changing Values" (ENCOUNTER, October) has the interesting purpose of "improving our understanding of the direction of, and potential for, social and political change." He seeks to do this by using the technique of the opinion poll to provide "reliable and valid measures of values in quantitative terms." (What other terms could a measurement be expressed in?) He fails for a number of reasons, fundamentally because the Poll technique cannot make the vital distinction between the people and the mass which Henry Fairlie very properly makes in "The Lessons of Watergate."

The mass is a conglomerate of units, the people a collection of highly differentiated persons. Statistical methods can only deal with the units of a conglomerate and, on subjects which are susceptible to measurement in units (such as money incomes or death rate), are indispensable. They cannot deal with subjects in which each respondent may count for more or less than a unit. For example, such methods are inapplicable to beliefs about values where a "*Yes*" to a particular question may indicate either a passionate affirmation for which a man would work or die, or a tepid preference for which he will not lift a finger.

His essay is not about "values" at all; it is about desires and preferences which are never values though sometimes based on value-judgments. A value, when it is not a market value, is what has intrinsic worth. Dr Abrams discusses what people want. Values are what people ought to want. Apart from one questionnaire which introduces the concept of desert, his polls are about what people wish to be the case. This is a perfectly respectable field of enquiry but *not* an enquiry into values. Dr Abrams makes it clear that he is using "value" in an unusual sense for he adopts a definition provided by Professor Rokeach under which a value is something which is socially or personally preferable to its opposite. That, at least, is fairly clear (just as Humpty-Dumpty made it clear what he meant by glory). But I have not been able to fathom what he means by "end-state", which would appear to imply something final and static until we discover that *a life of pleasure* is an end-state. We are also supposed to find that *a comfortable life* is a terminal value of high significance, a description I should find more appropriate to *a comfortable death.*

It might be hoped that the expression of a preference would give some useful indication as to the value-beliefs on which it was based, but the clues can be totally misleading. I may prefer immediate gratification of a desire for grilled sole to a set of tickets for *The Ring* at Bayreuth next year. On his own premises Dr Abrams must assume, and report, that I value grilled sole more highly than *The Ring*, and he would be wrong. Perhaps I doubted my own or Bayreuth's survival until next year; perhaps I was desperately hungry at the time and this temporary condition overwhelmed my more enduring value-preference.

A COLLECTION OF STATISTICAL SAMPLES of the occurrence of certain preferences and wishes is in no sense a measurement of those preferences and wishes, still less of the values which may underlie them. Such things are not susceptible to measurement. If they were so susceptible, the aesthetic value of a piece of sculpture could be determined with a tape-measure. All the Opinion Poll can do is, not measure preferences, but to measure the frequency of their occurrence, a very different thing.

Abrams' first table brings out a further limitation in the method employed, namely the impossibility of framing a questionnaire dealing with complex issues such that the enumeration of answers can support a rational conclusion. Respondents were asked to say which seemed the most and the next most desirable of the following:

1. Maintain law and order in the nation.
2. Give the people more say in important political decisions.
3. Achieve a higher standard of living for everyone.
4. Protect freedom of speech.

This formulation is logically wicked. For a choice between several posited desiderata to be meaningful, the desiderata must be independent. These four are not independent. The achievement of the other three are all dependent on the maintenance of law and order. A respondent putting the defence of freedom of speech first has, by implication, really put the maintenance of law and order first. The people cannot have more say in anything unless freedom of speech is protected. The four desiderata are much more nearly a causally linked chain than four independents among which choice is possible. It is misleading and dangerous to suggest that a cause and its effect are alternative. Nobody can opt *for* something and *against* its necessary pre-

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condition. This sort of *trahison des clercs* is a major cause of the disappointment at the non-fulfilment of unattainable expectations.

SIMILAR CONFUSIONS beset the tabulation of the *Perceived Present Standards of Living* for fifteen "broad socio-occupational groups." This looks innocent enough. But though the mass may be so sub-divided the people cannot be. Old-age pensioners, for example, perceived to have the lowest standard, include retired company directors who, prior to retirement, were perceived to have the highest standards, then plunged to the lowest. Many old-age pensioners are also investors and shareholders. I am myself dependent on income from investment but unfortunately do not reach my "perceived" standard. I fail to qualify on two out of the five criteria for affluence (these are all based on the possession of consumer-durables). Furthermore, on qualifying for the old-age pension, I expect a useful accretion of income rather than a plunge to the lowest standard. The trouble is that this class division (I use the term in a logical rather than a Marxist sense) will not do. The broad socio-occupational groups are not exclusive, many persons belong to two or more of the groups. Even more important, the variations of standard *within* a class are much wider than the "perceived" variations between classes.

AFTER ASKING the respondents what they perceived to be the standards of these overlapping classes, the interviewers went on to ask them what they thought should be the deserved standard of each class. Here we are getting nearer to a question of values, since desert is a moral concept. But the issue is clouded by the human proclivity to rate one's own desert too highly. The survey reports "a large and widespread sense of 'relative deprivation'." But since this only represents the natural tendency of each respondent to over-rate his own desert the impressive verbiage carries no profound social or political message. It is interesting that while the respondents thought that the gap between themselves and the highest-paid group should be reduced from 2.9 to 1.1, they also believed that the gap between themselves and the lowest-paid class should not be reduced at all.

In the light of this finding it is hard to see how Dr Abrams reaches his final general conclusion that the pressure for greater economic equality makes it essential to move towards such equality. What the figures throughout the article show is that most people wish for an absolute improvement in their own circumstances *and* a relative improvement in their own circumstances compared to their neighbours. This is very far from a compulsive pressure for Equality. Position in the "pecking order" is valued at least as highly as the equality that would abolish any pecking order.

On the subject of greater economic equality the survey departs into Cloud-cuckoo land. This greater equality would be achieved, we are told, "in part, by holding down or even reducing the standard of living of some groups and, in part, by raising sharply the living standards of those now seen to be very poor." Now, since holding down or even reducing a few will not produce a fund able to raise sharply the standards of many, we are given no clue as to how this might be done. By borrowing? Yes, if enough lenders could be found. But the process would collapse when debts came to be repaid. Governments may decree how a cake is to be divided, even if this has side-effects on the size of the cake; but they cannot decree that the cake be bigger.

DR ABRAMS' OTHER MAIN CONCLUSION is that the "classical Protestant-capitalist-middle-class prescription for the good life—the postponement of gratification of desires and pleasures" is not now accepted by the majority. It is, however, doubtful whether this represents any change in underlying value-beliefs (though it is a change of value in the Rokeach-Abrams private language). The old-fashioned belief has been eroded by a change in contingent circumstances, not necessarily by any loss of faith in the defining values. It was always the case (in the said Protestant-capitalist-middle-class prescription) that a postponed gratification had to be rationally discounted down the time scale. But, when the purchasing power of money was stable, the postponement of gratification by saving increased the eventual amount of gratification. When the purchasing power of money is declining by some 20% per annum and when the rate of interest, though high, is still negative in relation to the depreciation of money, any postponement of gratification leads to a decrease in its eventual amount. A policy that was once sensible and rewarding is now daft. It is theoretically possible that this change might be reversed if governments had the courage and strength to stop Inflation.

IT BECOMES EVIDENT that the uses of Opinion Polls are limited. When the questions can be clearly defined, when the alternative choices are clear-cut, independent, and mutually exclusive, then the results are instructive. This is the case with the Polls reflecting the current support of political parties. No respondent can vote for more than one party. The parties are independent entities, their number is small and their membership does not overlap. The main elements

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limiting predictive value of such polls are that a respondent may change his mind and, more important, may not bother to register his preference by casting his vote on polling-day. This is, of course, recognised by responsible pollsters who make no claim to prophesy—only to record a state of opinion at a given time. Similarly, such surveys can be very useful in market research devoted to a narrow range of projects.

Unfortunately, in more complex fields the difficulties of classification and the impossibility of drafting simple questions that are both meaningful and admit of unqualified answers render the technique of the opinion poll inapplicable. Complex problems seldom admit of simple questions or unqualified answers.

F. H. Keenlyside

MR KEENLYSIDE'S MISUNDERSTANDINGS are so numerous that I find it simplest to comment on them, not in the order of their importance, but rather in the order in which he presents them in his statement.

1. I fail to "make the vital distinction between the people and the mass." I do so because I regard any such distinction as false. It is a distinction still occasionally used either by demagogues who pretend that "mass" or "masses" denotes something finer and more compelling than "people", or by self-appointed élitists seeking a blanket insult to convey their conviction that the underlying population constitutes a sub-human species.

2. Of course the strength with which people hold convictions may vary enormously from "passionate affirmation" to a "tepid preference", and that is why for at least the past forty years those concerned with measuring attitudes and beliefs have developed scales which measure the saliency of each person's attitudes and beliefs. For example, when in our survey we asked people how much social equality they would like to see in Britain they were asked to use a *0-to-10* scale to indicate the strength of their views and some people "tepidly" replied with a score of *5* or *6* and others "passionately affirmed" a score of *10*. Their replies were not treated as identical.

3. Mr Keenlyside is free to define "value" in any way that pleases him. I prefer to use it in the way it is generally employed by social scientists, *i.e.* an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end is "good" and that this goodness is best expressed in relation to its converse. For example, the belief that "*freedom*" is a value embraces a rejection of its converse "*slavery*."

4. It might help Mr Keenlyside to understand what is meant by an "end-state" if he bears in mind the distinction commonly made between means and ends.

5. If Mr Keenlyside *persistently* preferred grilled sole to hearing *The Ring* at Bayreuth then he would be indicating something about his values.

6. The fact that Mr Keenlyside regards the four choices offered to respondents as a piece of "wicked logic" would seem to me to be a measure of his remoteness from the real world. He declares that three of the four are "all dependent on the maintenance of law and order" and that "by implication" no matter what the respondent says he "really puts the maintenance of law and order first." At least my morning newspaper (if not his) reports that currently there are people throughout the world who are prepared to sacrifice their liberty and, if necessary, their lives because they feel that freedom of speech and democratic government are more important than "law and order."

7. I know that among the retired population there are some affluent investors and shareholders, but I am also sure that when the phrase "old-age pensioners" is used most people understand it to mean those retired people whose main source of income is a State pension that is received as part of the national social security system.

8. I did not conclude that there is "a compulsive pressure for Equality." What I wrote was: "[this] is an egalitarianism that is both tinged by envy and held in check by deference towards their traditional 'betters' and by continuing undervaluation of society's traditional underdogs" (p. 32).

9. I offered "no clue" as to how to raise the standard of living of the many since the enquiry was not concerned to discover such clues. People who want a higher standard of living through a redistribution of income and wealth may (as Mr Keenlyside says) be living in a Cloud-cuckoo land; but their conviction that this is possible is very much a reality.

10. Mr Keenlyside's assertion that the abandonment of the "Protestant virtue" of saving and investing for the future is a rational response to the present state of 20% annual decline in the value of money is typically unhistorical. For at least the past 25 years the unique distinction of British society is the very high proportion of the national income devoted to consumption and, therefore the very low proportion going into saving and investment. This was true even when the annual rate of inflation was no more than 3% or 4%.

Mark Abrams

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Oldenburg

POOR GRAMMAR: A new "battle of the books" has broken out in German education with the revolt of parents against new required readings for children which has taken place in the state of Oldenburg. A new textbook, introduced after the progressive reform movement of recent years, "Drucksachen" (Printed Matter) has been popularly referred to as "Drecksachen" (Dirty Stuff). Among the authors represented in the readings for children is Ulrike Meinhof, currently on trial for anarcho-terroristic activities. Among the features of the new textbook is a special list of terms with which children can conveniently express their "alienation" by abusing the teachers ("Arschgeiger . . . Einpeitscher . . . etc."). On page 61 there is a passage which is supposed to represent modern wisdom on the subject of Grammar: ". . . There is, after all, no real agreement as to what constitutes proper speech or writing. Language is created by the poor, and it is the poor classes which renew it and keep it vital. And it is the rich who give it a class rigidity, in order to be able to look down on those who do not use the language as they do. . . ."

DIE WELT

London

DRACO'S DEATH: *"Draconian" seemed a curiously inappropriate adjective to pick for Roy Jenkins's anti-terrorist measures. Perhaps he was making an unconscious concession to the growing feeling that capital punishment should have been among them.*

The whole point about the punishments prescribed by Draco in Athens in the seventh century B.C. was that the death penalty applied not merely to murder but to almost everything else as well. As Plutarch noted, "those that were convicted of idleness were to die, and those that stole a cabbage or an apple."

Possibly Mr Jenkins had forgotten Draco's answer when asked why he made death the penalty for so long a list of offences: "Small ones deserve that, and I have no higher for the greater crimes."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

TRANSVERBIAL TORTUOSITY: *There must surely somewhere be a reader with a secret wish to buy a dog and call him Spot, purely for the pleasure, when evicting him into the garden, of saying "Out, damned Spot!"*

It is probable that the crossword craze which migrated from America and began to take hold in this country some 50 years ago has greatly increased this tendency to play with words, so that today one instantly recognizes the ability of a cart-horse *to wreck an* orchestra, *or that of a* decorator *to re-design the* Trocadero, *while we do not need to be told that an exploding grenade tends to derange a grandee, making him angered or even enraged.*

A chopstick is seen not only as a singularly musical aid to eating in the Orient but also as comprising two remarkably antonymous synonyms of the verb "to cleave". Mary is famous not for reorganising the army (since Myra has an equal claim) but as the girl who extended the oyster season by one month (by putting an r into May of course).

All this is nothing new. Shakespeare punned with the best of them: "Is this the fine of his fines . . . to have his fine pate full of fine dirt?" asks Hamlet concerning the skull of one who may have been a lawyer. Bacon was a master of the anagram, but whether that well-known word in Act 5 Scene 1 of Love's Labour's Lost *was created as an anagram of "Hi ludi, F Baconis nati, tuiti orbi" (These plays, born of F. Bacon, are preserved for the world) or vice versa, I am not sure. There is no truth in the rumour that the size of* The Times *Jumbo Crossword, 27 squares by 27, was dictated by the length of this monster word honorificabilitudinitatibus.*

THE TIMES

London

IGNOBLE SAVAGE: *Why bring Rousseau into it? We saw [Alan Watkins writes] Mr Heath's speech-writer, the Hon. William Waldegrave, sitting in a bus and discoursing toughly on phasing and timing in the campaign, for all the world as if he were an American or something. Mr Waldegrave is of humane education and is clearly a bright lad.*

Why is he behaving in this way? Why is he writing the kind of rubbish that politicians want? Why does he not go back to All Souls or somewhere and write a book, or even a few articles?

Perhaps it was Mr Waldegrave however who inserted the reference to Rousseau in Mr Heath's speech on the social contract, an extract from which we also heard last night. This was a mistake. I am all for elevating public debate and not talking down to people, but references to long dead philosophers of whom Tory audiences have never heard—Labour audiences too for that matter—cause nothing except bewilderment and annoyance.

EVENING STANDARD

Beirut

REVOLUTIONARY PROGRESS: The program of reforms of the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council has claimed a new victim—the metric system.

The Libyan news agency quoted the newspaper "Al-Fateh," organ of the command, as saying that the metric system is "Western" and "a vestige of colonialism" that would be changed soon.

It said changes are being made to adopt Arab weights and measures "used by the Arab nation before the colonialist conquests of our land."

Previous reform laws included the banning of alcohol; stoning of adulterers; chopping off the limbs of thieves; and imposition of Arabic script in passports of foreigners entering Libya.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

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LETTERS

"The New Proletariat"

THERE ARE MANY IMPORTANT confusions in Jonathan Power's article "The New Proletariat" [ENCOUNTER, September] but two are of outstanding importance and cannot be allowed to pass. At no point, as far as I can see, does he discuss the benefits of migration to the migrants themselves! He argues that *our* social stability is threatened, and that *their* nations do not gain. He states, moreover, that the only arguments, apart from these, worthy of consideration are those of our captains of industry who say we need migration for economic growth. Yet the basic argument is, and must be, that the individuals who choose to migrate are better off; and I can see no justification for taking the position either that they are the property of their countries, or that they are not "really" better off, because their migration was irrational. All the evidence is that migration is a rational response to economic opportunity, not a reckless plunge after the bright lights.

The second point is this: it is arguable (just) that rural development will slow down the drift to the cities in developing countries, where urban expected real incomes are perhaps only twice those of the rural areas. There is absolutely no way on earth that rural development in Turkey, Yugoslavia, Southern Italy, Portugal, Algeria, Morocco, or the West Indies will provide incomes sufficient to rival those of modern Germany, or France, or even Britain. Third World urban problems are simply irrelevant to the issue. Migration to a developed country is, and will remain, for the foreseeable future, the best opportunity (if available) for an unskilled migrant. Whether it is the best for our countries, or for theirs, is another question.

MARTIN WOLF

Washington, D.C.

JONATHAN POWER in your issue of September 1974 commits two analytical errors that colour unhelpfully some of his subsequent reasoning. He describes the disadvantageous aspects of urbanisation in underdeveloped countries as a result of rural-to-urban migration. The countryside remains neglected and the "family size grows." Power thus falls back on the popular belief that high fertility is a recent phenomenon and that it interferes with development. This belief is also comfortable, because it provides an easy let-off: if only the poor stopped having children. . . . Actually, the complexities of development are greater than this simple thought, as many voices recognise. Most recently, John D. Rockefeller III, a leading and powerful proponent of the comfortable approach, hit the world headlines by qualifying a quarter-of-a-century of public activity (at the World Population Conference in Bucharest). It is also an empirical fact consistent with demographic theory that the proportion of children under 15 (the alleged "burden" on society) has not been changing markedly in underdeveloped societies from its level of around 40 or 45%, rural-urban migration or no migration.

The impact of international emigration on the sending country is summarised by suggesting for the future of Algeria, Turkey, and Portugal the present marasmus of depopulated Ireland. The combined populations of the three countries are seven times the size of the population of Ireland when it was hit by the Great Famine of 1845–49, while today's immigration opportunities are only a fraction of what was available 130 years ago. There is just not enough space to do the job. In whatever way the three countries might solve their problems, it will not be through the Irish model of depopulation.

KAROL KROTKI

Department of Sociology,
University of Alberta,
Edmonton, Canada

I HAVE READ Jonathan Power's article in ENCOUNTER, "The New Proletariat" [September]. Both my husband and I found it highly interesting. I do, however, think that there are a couple of points that could be dwelt upon to provide more understanding of the differences in regard to integration of immigrants in different countries, or even to their treatment as "equals."

One is the philosophy in regard to employment of women. There is a real difference between Sweden and Switzerland, as our attitudes and even Government policy are strongly in favour of married women working. Switzerland is "saving" its women; I hope it shows up in the statistics. The other is what might loosely be called the trade union attitude. In Sweden the sanitation workers are no underclass but belong to a well-paid union. I admit that there are some less protected jobs in restaurant kitchens, etc. But there is definitely less of a general tendency to hold immigrants down to specific underclass jobs.

These are just some brief marginal notes. My interest is explained by the fact that I have been chairman of the *equality* group for the TUC and the Labour Party. Our slogan *work for everybody*, meaning it literally, has now become the official programme, leading to attempts to place women, youth, handicapped, elderly, etc. in jobs *before* we resort to more immigration. An examination by an expert like Jonathan Power would be highly interesting.

ALVA MYRDAL

New York City

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MARTIN WOLF seems as much a victim of the illusion of economic progress as the new proletarians themselves. I wish I could take him with me to talk to all the hundreds of immigrants in many European countries that I have talked to over the last five or six years. So many of them have spoken about the shame they feel in having to lead a double life *vis-à-vis* their relations back home. They have not found the promised land. All too often they are living in slum conditions far worse than the village life they abandoned, yet when they return for holidays they have to parade themselves in their shiny new suits, with their tape recorder in one hand and their new camera in the other—attempting to prove that their youthful decision to immigrate was not a mistake. Indeed this double life is one of the reasons for the phenomenally high rates of mental illness among the immigrant population of Europe. This observation I think goes part of the way to answering Mr Wolf's second point. And added to it is the very real factor, which I attempted to bring out in my article, that as long as the Third World countryside loses its brightest and most ambitious young men to an alien economy it has no hope of ever achieving any kind of self-generating economic momentum of its own. There is enormous unrealised potential for economic activity in the rural sector of all developing countries, and I plan to discuss this in some more detail in a future article in ENCOUNTER. Can I in the meanwhile ask Mr Wolf to re-look at my footnote No 27 which showed that the lesson of Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Egypt is just this?

I DON'T UNDERSTAND how Professor Krotki reads into my article that I am of the "If only the poor stop having children" school of thought. Certainly I believe—along with John Rockefeller—that the fast increasing population growth is a problem but, like him, I also believe that social and economic changes are the best contraceptive, not condoms.

On his second point, it is of course true that Ireland is the extreme case but that does not undermine my argument about the rural economy and its potential. The rural population is being depleted almost as fast as it was in the 19th century, only this time most of the emigrants are pouring into their own metropolitan areas—a problem I refer to in some detail in my article.

JONATHAN POWER

London

Quinton's "Critical Theory"

The "Frankfurt School of Sociology" (Horkheimer, Adorno, et. al)

I AM TOLD that Mr Anthony Quinton is a much respected expert in the field of philosophy. But having read his article "Critical Theory" (ENCOUNTER, October, pp. 43–53) I can hardly believe it. That any article appearing in ENCOUNTER would most probably *not* be sympathetic to the premises of the Frankfurt School was to be expected. I feel, nevertheless, that the very form Mr Quinton's polemic took transcended the boundaries of fair play and was not far short of personal insult.

A critic who characterises Adorno's writings as "wild, rhapsodic and sibylline, the sort of tumultuous free association of ideas that might be encountered at a very highbrow party very late at night", and who calls Habermas "a parody of a German professor" who "writes with a knotted involution beside which the works of Kant seem like the directions on a tin of soup", not only betrays a complete lack of critical principles but also disqualifies himself entirely. If Mr Quinton knew half as much about Critical Theory as Habermas about Anglo-American social theory he could have done a valuable job in trying to introduce one of the most relevant concepts of social thought into the by now notorious poverty of British social theory. But I fear it never even occurred to him that there is a deep if mediated affinity between the cultural criticism of the Frankfurt School and the *Scrutiny* group on the one hand, and the social criticism of Jürgen Habermas and Raymond Williams on the other.

As things are, I do hope that Mr Quinton may at least overcome his way of making "easy speeches that comfort cruel men" (G. K. Chesterton).

JÜRGEN KRAMER

Philipps-Universität, Marburg

ANTHONY QUINTON (October) puts well the deficiencies of Critical Theory: its unargued methodology, its empirical weakness. But when he reaches its critique of positivism he is surely a little prejudiced.

Mr Quinton properly represents the critical theorists' view of positivistic social science as that it "endorses the *status quo* under a misleading veil of value-neutrality." This is the nub of the argument. But it is basically a very old nub, so it is surprising to find Mr Quinton continuing with comfortable talk

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about "facts". Perhaps he wants to make his readers feel at ease; but Mr Quinton must know the good old case that there is no such thing as "the facts", *tout court*, in human studies. The point is not that positivism is simply "a kind of propaganda for the *status quo*." It is rather that the attempt to establish a value-free social science is in the nature of things impossible because of the unconscious but ubiquitous intrusion of class values. If this point be taken, Mr Quinton's question, "to what extent positivist social theorists have in fact been determined partisans of the *status quo*", is seen to be almost obtuse. From this position we may answer another extraordinary question he puts: "If positivistic social science is false, how does it manage to supply an effective social technology for the socially dominative purposes it is alleged to endorse?"

1. Positivism is not false in the sense that its prescriptions are never "effective", but in the sense that it colours "the facts" while seeming not to do so; and therefore colours its effects, quite successfully.

2. The word "effective" is instructively vague and value-free: effective for what?

Some Marxist theorists look to a time when false consciousness will be replaced by a social science unquestionably scientific, grounded in the consciousness of the revolutionary proletariat—so seductive is the word "science" to all sides. This philosophically dubious and theoretically unnecessary manoeuvre (a grotesquely circuitous return to the basic misapprehension of positivism) is avoided by most critical theory. Lucien Goldmann says: "some value-judgments permit a better understanding of reality than others." Though this raises questions about the relative merits of values it is surely right that they should be raised in their full complexity. To take a simple example: a socialist may prefer the word "exploitation" to one that is bogusly value-free precisely because it is "loaded" in what he thinks is the right way.

EDWARD LARRISSY

University College of North Wales, Bangor

MR KRAMER SAYS that I betray a complete lack of critical principles and disqualify myself entirely from discussing the work of the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School because I complain of the wilful obscurity of Adorno and Habermas. I suspect that my real offence in his eyes is a lack of decorum. I made it clear that I was reporting on the ideas of the Critical Theorists from the point of view of an English-speaking, and English-thinking, audience that might be interested in those ideas if they could only find out what they were. Hitherto intellectual travellers such as the late George Lichtheim have darkly intimated the novelty and importance of the Frankfurt School but have failed to convey what its members were actually saying. I was suggesting that direct approach to the writings of Adorno and Habermas was not to be recommended to those looking for enlightenment.

There is, I suppose, some very marginal affinity between the Frankfurt School and the *Scrutiny* group to the extent that both are, if in very different ways, anti-technological. But there is a very deep-seated difference between the points of departure and emphases of the two schools of thought. Dislike of scientific objectivity and, even more, of its technological fruits is an intellectual commonplace which unites both with Heidegger and the adherents of oriental mystery cults. Raymond Williams's addition of some elements of Marxism to some of the themes of Dr Leavis brings him closer to the Frankfurt School, but (like Leavis himself) he is resolutely non-philosophical. Again, both Leavis and Williams acknowledge the authority of tradition, in particular the tradition of value incorporated in the highest achievements of imaginative literature, in a way to which nothing in the doctrines of the Frankfurt School corresponds.

MR LARRISSY QUITE RIGHTLY OBSERVES that my arguments against the view that "positivist" social science endorses the *status quo* (under the disguise of neutrality about values) are sketchy. But the question as to how far positivist social theorists have in fact supported the *status quo* is surely relevant to the issue. It might be obtuse to infer from the answer that they do not consistently do so that the matter is closed. For it might well be that endorsement of the *status quo* was an unintended consequence of their work. I did indeed point out that the rational beauty of the economic theorist's model of a freely competitive system as guaranteed to maximise utility can be (and has been) misinterpreted as a justification of the actualities of capitalism from which that model is a highly selective abstraction. By calling positivist social theory "effective" I meant simply that it produces the results that those who apply it wish it to produce. To the extent that it is effective in this sense (which is less, in my opinion, than the critical theorists suppose) the claim that the predictions on which those applications are based, and the theories that yield the predictions, are true is supported.

I cannot see that to describe entrepreneurial profit as such and not as "exploitation" is to use *bogusly* value-free language. The question as to how much, if any, of such profit is reward for services rendered is left open for serious discussion by that way of describing it. To call it "exploitation" is to preclude that discussion from the start and to invite the stifling of knowledge by unargued prejudice, just as much as it would be to describe it as the reward of abstinence.

I do not share the rather broad, amorphous scepticism about the notion of fact that Mr Larrissy professes but is unlikely to practise in a domestic dispute or a court case. I readily admit, however, that values enter into social science explanations because of the fact that there may be a plurality of distinct but equally correct explanations of a given state of affairs. The selection between such alternatives for practical decisions may well be guided by value preferences. For example, output might be low because workers are not worried about losing their jobs and also because their jobs are disagreeable to them. Both may be necessary conditions of the unsatisfactory state of affairs, but what is to be done about it will depend on which one is selected.

ANTHONY QUINTON

New College, Oxford

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Letter from Zurich. . . "What Thinketh Solzhenitsyn?"

WHEREVER I GO these days, the moment the deep dark secret that I come from Zurich is divulged there come the inevitable questions: "Do you know Solzhenitsyn? what is he writing? what is he thinking? . . ." This is the way we Swiss are cross-examined these days, and I was hard pressed in London, recently, and again in Washington, to come up with some proper answers. What do they really believe: that the illustrious Russian exile conducts some kind of literary salon along the Limmat (which James Joyce once besang)? Or perhaps it is a matter of "status" or prestige, for after all anybody who is anybody in Zurich town must be running across Solzhenitsyn at parties or in cafés (the "in" ones, of course). How embarrassing it all is when one has to confess, again and again, that unfortunately one hadn't yet, or quite, or up till now, had the happy opportunity of . . . etc. After that, interest in a Swiss visitor sinks to zero.

I was forced to think back to another, not unrelated incident. I was then living in Paris, and was doing a broadcast on French cultural affairs in a West German television studio. Couldn't I tell them all about Sartre and Aragon and Beckett—what they were writing and what they were currently thinking—as if I had just left them in some Left Bank salon or café? How could I confess that I had run into Sartre (at least as far as a serious conversation was concerned) only once—and that happened to be in Zurich. I once called on Louis Aragon and all I learned from him for a full hour was the importance of being editor-in-chief of a Paris evening paper. And as for Beckett, what I knew about him (what he was "really" thinking) came from one of his translators, Tophoven, and from the philosopher Cioran, and the painter Bram van Veld. I couldn't help feeling like that nice American lady in Washington who, in a Georgetown cocktail party discussion of some recent best-seller, was asked whether she had already read the book in question, and replied: "Yes, but not personally."

IN THE CASE OF SOLZHENITSYN *one couldn't even resort to that familiar (and nasty) intellectual ruse: icy supercilious indignation. One has encountered enough of that: the outrage against a Russian dissident who is applauded and cheered by " the wrong (i.e. conservative) side"; the hate/envy of an author who has earned a lot of money and still calls on our sympathies: the hyper-criticism of an intellectual who may be a source of some relevant information but who is basically a mediocre (and, in any case, "reactionary") novelist. Alan Brien, busy with porno-culture in his* Sunday Times *column, is quickly bored by Solzhenitsyn; German intellectuals, still tilting their lances at the Axel Springer press empire, find Samizdat keeping bad company on the Elbe. But surely these, and other similar efforts, count for very little when compared to what the Russians and all the East Europeans themselves feel about Solzhenitsyn's body of work. How silly the West can be!*

THE SILLY SEASON took a new turn for me in the Garrick Club in London where I happened to meet a distinguished English scholar. Surprisingly his first question was not, "Have you seen Solzhenitsyn?" But, rather, he explained and apologised: "Sorry I didn't call you in Zurich last week. But I happened to be meeting Solzhenitsyn over the week-end, and we talked all the time. . . ." So, at long last, I could turn the tables and promptly did: "What thinketh Solzhenitsyn?" My friend hesitated for a moment, and then went on with admirable academic thoroughness: "Before I can properly give you an account of that, I must clear up certain widespread misunderstandings about the nature of Pan-Slavism and traditional Russian Nationalism (and one or two other things as well). . . ." This took a fascinating hour, but we never even reached St Petersburg in 1917, let alone Zurich of the week-end before last.

In some desperation I tried making a last-minute telephone call. I simply could not return to Zurich without some proper scraps of information. My persistence was rewarded. "Oh, you want to know what Solzhenitsyn is really like? Well, in the first place, I've never met anyone, in East or West, who has his kind of concentrated intellectual vitality. It is a rare mental intensity. . . . When I put some theses to him—of some seriousness and complexity he listened to my long, rather rambling remarks with patience and attention. He then apologised for withdrawing for a minute or two to his own study to ponder the matters in question for himself alone. When he returned he made a breath-taking one-minute resumé of my position and then stated his own views methodically, point for point, with exhaustive precision. . . ."

THIS MUCH, THEN, *I can pass on to all curious spirits. Before I return home I will be listening in on such literary conversations as go on in New York and Palo Alto, and it could be that before I am back in Solzhenitsyn's Zurich I may well have a scrap or two more to report.*

François Bondy

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The People v. the Elites?

A Reply to Henry Fairlie—By SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET

HENRY FAIRLIE in his article "The Lessons of Watergate" [ENCOUNTER, October] places the responsibility for the American public's supposed focus on the threat to democracy from the Masses rather than from within the Elites on "the obsession of an influential group of American intellectuals with the masses and their authoritarian personality, which formed the common thread in a collection of their essays, *The Radical Right*, which Richard Hofstadter edited during the 1950s."

Unfortunately, Mr Fairlie is "obsessed" (he uses a variant of the word "obsession" three times in one column on p. 23 in referring to this argument) with an image of the writing of Hofstadter and other contributors to *The Radical Right* which has little relationship to the book or the essays in it. Although Fairlie may have read the book, he clearly has not looked at it recently. If he had, he would have noticed that its editor is Daniel Bell, not Richard Hofstadter. Hofstadter, in fact, contributed two short articles running 23 pages out of the 377 in the volume. In these articles, he seeks to identify the ideology and social background of the "pseudo-conservative" (a term borrowed from Theodor Adorno and others of the Frankfurt School of "critical sociology"). And Hofstadter locates the social base of support for pseudo-conservatism as partially from the ranks of "the old ultra-conservatism and the old isolationism heightened by the extraordinary pressures of the contemporary world" (p. 67), but even more from the anxious status-seekers. As he put it: "pseudo-conservatism is in good part a product of the rootlessness and heterogeneity of American life, and above all, of its peculiar scramble for status and its peculiar search for secure identity" (p. 69). If one re-reads Hofstadter's brilliant essay, one will not find an attack on the Masses and a glorification of Elites, but rather a description of the sources of the paranoia of the status-strivers which fits Richard Nixon and the faceless men of his White House perfectly.

In his introductory essay to *The Radical Right* (1963) Daniel Bell pulled together the emphases in the various essays in the book. As he noted, the contributors stressed that the threat to democracy came from "the dispossessed," those who were losing out in the political and social changes of post-war America. But who were the dispossessed? According to Bell, they were "the generational dispossessed", "the managerial dispossessed" and the "military dispossessed."

1. The first group includes older generations of the once powerful who reacted negatively to the "deep changes taking place in the social structure that are reworking the social map of the country, upsetting the established life chances and outlooks of old, privileged groups, and creating uncertainties about the future which are deeply unsettling to those whose values are shaped by the 'individualist' morality of nineteenth century America" (p. 17).

2. "The managerial executive class . . . under immense strain all through this period, a strain arising in part from the status discrepancy between their power within a particular enterprise and their power and prestige in the nation as a whole" (p. 22).

3. "The military establishment . . . ill-equipped to grasp modern conceptions of politics, or to use the tools (computer simulation, linear programming, gaming theory) of strategic planning. . . . In structural terms, the military establishment may be one of the tripods of a 'power élite,' but in sociological fact the military officers feel dispossessed because they often lack the necessary technical skills or knowledge to answer the new problems confronting them" (pp. 24–25).

EIGHT YEARS EARLIER in his introduction to the first edition of the book, published as *The New American Right* (1955)—a collection of articles dealing with McCarthyism which are reprinted in *The Radical Right*, together with new essays by each contributor—Bell summed up the analyses by pointing out that America had

> "learned to include the 'excluded interest,' the populist farmers and the organized workers. These economic interest groups take a legitimate place in the society and the ideological conflicts [stemming from them] . . . have been mitigated. The new divisions created by the status anxieties of new middle-class groups pose a new threat. The rancor of McCarthyism was one of its ugly excesses." (p. 59)

Although Mr Fairlie does not mention any of the other contributors to *The Radical Right* in his article, I may note that my two essays in it cover 118 pages, almost a third of the book. These chapters attempted to report on the extant data with respect to support for three different radical rightist movements, the Coughlinites of the 1930s, Senator Joseph McCarthy's backers in the early 1950s, and the followers and members of the John Birch Society in the beginning of the 1960s. My detailed analysis stressed that the three "differ considerably in their predominant appeal. Coughlin was primarily successful in attracting a following among Catholics and among the economically deprived. . . . As contrasted with Coughlin, McCarthy had more success among the traditional sources of Republican and conservative strength, . . . particularly among the urban and rural self-employed. . . . The Birch Society . . . has had its primary success with the more well-to-do segments of conservative political opinion" (pp. 364–365).

SOME OF THE CONFUSION as to what the contributors to *The Radical Right* were saying lies in the fact that Hofstadter and others described Joe McCarthy and other radical rightists as "populists," meaning by this not exponents of the political doctrines of the left-oriented Populist party of the 1890s but rather an emphasis on majoritarian beliefs over the rule of law, constitutional rights, juridical protections. Populism

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in the generic sense has this meaning, one which says nothing about the social base of a given movement, or the socio-economic content of its ideology. As is obvious from the data, McCarthyism and the Birch Society derived their social base from traditional conservative and Republican ranks, not from left or Populist Party roots. (Parenthetically, I would note my puzzlement over the fact that Michael Rogin devoted an entire book, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy*, to refuting the assumption supposedly advanced in *The Radical Right* that McCarthy's social support and ideology represented continuity with the 19th-century Populist Party. In *The Radical Right*, I had also noted that "The evidence bearing on the belief McCarthy appealed to the traditional 'populist' ideology, directed against organized labor and big business, also produced contradictory results.")

In accounting at the end of my section in *The Radical Right* for the repeated failures of right-wing movements in America, I noted: "The involved structure of the constitutional systems, the division of powers, the juridical protections, the complex and diverse sources of opinion and interest differences, and *ultimately the good sense of the large majority* have frustrated them" (p. 369).

Before Mr Fairlie trusts his memory about a book published more than a decade ago, perhaps he ought to re-read it.

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Mass.

Norman Douglas

THE ARTICLE ON NORMAN DOUGLAS written by Constantine FitzGibbon in the September issue of ENCOUNTER contains two references to my late husband, Arthur Johnson, both of them incorrect. The first (page 30) only concerns my husband, whereas the second (pages 34 and 35) chiefly concerns Norman Douglas. I shall deal here with the second of these references.

On page 34 C.F. states: "And before I left Capri, Arthur Johnson told me a story which was certainly not in that 'lost chapter'." C.F. then proceeds to tell the story of *Adolphe*. On 2nd October, on the other hand, in a letter to my son, John, C.F. says, also about *Adolphe*: "The story was told me by your father, on the occasion of our last meeting, in London." The contradictory nature of these two statements as regards time and place is due to the fact that, in his article, C.F. has blended into one (with fanciful additions of his own) two totally different stories told him by my husband, one in Capri and one in London. I shall now give the correct version of each story.

One day my husband came back to the Mulino a Vento (our house at Anacapri) after meeting Norman in Capri on the latter's return from Ischia. He pulled a small book from his pocket and told me that Norman had just given it to him saying that it was the only book he had taken to Ischia. As my husband had slipped the book in his pocket with only a cursory glance, we examined it together. I have it here. It measures 14.5 × 9.5 cms.. is bound in marbled boards, with calf back and corners, and bears Norman's "N.D." blue rubber stamp on the inside cover. The title on the spine is: *Shipwrecks. 1819*, and the title page reads: "Wonderful Escapes! Containing the Interesting Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Antelope Packet. The Loss of the Lady Hobart Packet on an Island of Ice—The Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Hercules on the Coast of Africa—An Account of an Extraordinary Escape From the Effects of a Storm in a Journey over the Frozen Sea in North America. —Dublin: Printed by W. Espy, 6, Little Strand-St.— 1819." I clearly remember my husband remarking on the excellence of Norman's choice of reading matter to take to an island because, he said, "islands have always had such strong associations with shipwrecks."

At some later date my husband returned to the Mulino a Vento one day after spending the afternoon with Norman at the Villa Tuoro. He was excited and, again taking a small book from his pocket, at once said: "Look at this! Isn't it charming?" The book measures 14.5 × 10 cms. and is bound in orangey-brown morocco. Along the spine are stamped six small hearts and a date, 1899, in gold. Four similar hearts, one in each corner, are stamped on the cover with the word *Adolphe*, also in gold, the whole being framed with a thin gold line. The inside cover bears Norman's "N.D." blue rubber stamp. There is no inscription. My husband, who was enchanted with this book, told me how Norman had come to give it to him. The two of them were in Norman's rooms; Norman was busy at his desk, my husband engaged in reading the names of the books on the shelves. He spotted one with six little hearts and just a date on its spine, was intrigued, and asked Norman if he could pull it out. Not only did Norman readily agree, but he also told him its story. While on their honeymoon on Ischia, he said, he and his wife, Elsa, had discovered a second-hand bookshop. It became a great attraction and they visited it almost daily. In it Norman had found the *Adolphe*, but hadn't bought it because the binding was in bad condition. Elsa, who had noticed his interest in the book, had bought it without telling him, had had it re-bound, and had given it to him later as a souvenir. The gift had charmed Norman, and that had been sufficient reason for keeping it all those years, irrespective of what happened afterwards. Having related this, Norman insisted that my husband keep the book because, he said, it would mean nothing to anyone any more once he was gone.

Such is the *Adolphe* story. There is no reason to assume that Elsa had read it or knew what it was about, and the nonsense that has been written on the subject in ENCOUNTER ought to be de-mystified. It is quite misleading for C.F. to say: "It lifts a corner of the curtain." If there was a curtain, Norman had lifted it himself and had revealed nothing worse than a touching little episode of his private life.

CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON tells us that Norman Douglas entrusted the writing of his biography to him with the admonition: "You can say anything you like about me, provided it is the truth", and one may well ask oneself how trustworthy this disorderly piece of writing belched up twenty-five years later can be, and

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how much of it relies on misrepresentations for the sake of sensationalism. There is, for example, the spurious allegation on page 34: "Norman always had his doubts about Robin's paternity." Not only were such doubts never voiced by Norman, but on more than one occasion he stated quite clearly that Robin's birth had been the result of an attempt at reconciliation with Elsa. I remember him saying it once in Robin's presence in Capri, and there are photographs (*Looking Back*, Vol. I, page 202; *Norman Douglas, A Pictorial Record*, Constantine FitzGibbon, page 55) that bear out an unquestionable resemblance between father and son.

Those who were fortunate enough to know Norman Douglas during the last years of his life (1946–1952) remember him as a rare example of wisdom and humanity. The storms he had weathered had polished and strengthened an already exceptional personality, and although he had his idiosyncrasies they were pretty harmless. What emerged, what impressed, was a certain radiance that communicated itself through a sense of fun, ready wit, fairness, goodwill, and an absolute rejection of sham. A contemptuous laugh would have greeted this latest concoction of a would-be biographer: "Hah! Picking my bones again!", he would have said, and one is left with the feeling that the man who wrote "A Plea for Better Manners" deserved better manners.

VIOLA JOHNSON

Lausanne, Switzerland

I ENJOYED Mr Constantine FitzGibbon's article on Norman Douglas [ENCOUNTER, September], but with reservations. For example I was surprised at the reference to Norman "switching off his hearing aid." Although I knew Norman in his old age, and indeed spent part of the final summer (1951) of his life with him on Capri, I did not ever see him use a hearing aid. I think the only hearing aids he needed were his own ears. He did of course disconnect when he was bored, simply by pretending to be asleep.

Then, as I remember it, his term for that morning giddiness—or a mild hangover—was not skuimpy. It was *swimpy*. And the late Kenneth McPherson didn't marry two millionairesses. Just the one.

ELIZABETH DAVID

London

MRS. ARTHUR JOHNSON'S AMPLIFICATION of the story concerning Norman Douglas and the copy of *Adolphe* given by him to her late husband is undoubtedly correct, as is her conclusion that I must have confused two conversations I had with Arthur Johnson a quarter of a century ago. I myself never saw that book nor the book about shipwrecks, otherwise of course I should not have made that mistake. I stand corrected. On the other hand it was Arthur himself who commented to me on the strangeness of *Adolphe* as a honeymoon present. For it is most unlikely that a woman as well educated as was Elsa should not have known what were the contents of *Adolphe*. It is, after all, among the most famous novels ever written, and she was herself a writer.

At no time did Norman ever say that his son Robin was illegitimate, or at least not to me. What he did say, and I would not have repeated unless cornered, was this. At one time Robin wrote to his father about what was then a most delicate matter, namely the obtaining of an abortion. Norman replied at length on this most confidential matter. He told me that Robin then proceeded, almost at once, to sell this letter to a dealer. Norman, when he told me this story, said that he found it hard to believe any son of his could do such a thing, and that it reinforced his suspicions that Robin's father might have been a certain Austrian officer encountered in Ceylon. There is no reason why he should have discussed this unpleasant matter with Mr or Mrs Johnson or indeed

The New Illiteracy

New York City

PUBLISHERS, *responding to a changing market in college texts, are increasingly resorting to simplified language in their books to adjust to a new element in higher education—the college student who cannot read at traditional college levels.*

In recent years, publishers here report, word has been coming back from the campuses, particularly two-year community colleges and urban institutions, that their books are "too hard" for students to grasp. The result has been a growing trend toward a new subdivision of the $392-million college-book publishing industry aimed at filling the needs of these students.

Although most of the pressure for simplified texts come from community colleges, the established, four-year colleges are also giving signs that today's students—raised on television, movies and what one educator called "the antilanguage assumptions of our culture" are having trouble with the English language when they get to college.

The number of freshmen taking remedial English at Eastern Michigan University has doubled in the last four years, for example. Some 45 per cent of the students at the University of California are similarly taking remedial English and stories of "functionally illiterate" students who are skilled in verbal expression but who stumble in reading and writing are becoming common.

Publishers, who are understandably reluctant to open themselves to charges of watering down the cultural quality of their product, stress that the new directions in college publishing are largely in response to the increase in community college enrollment—which grew from 739,000 in 1965 to 3,132,000 last year.

NEW YORK TIMES

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with anyone other than his biographer. Since I did not write his biography, I have hitherto refrained from telling this not very interesting tale.

I can only say that I agree with Mrs Johnson's appreciation of Norman's character in his old age. I did, after all, know him extremely well. And, as I said, it was principally because of what she calls his "pretty harmless . . . idiosyncrasies", leading to his and Orioli's flight from Italy in connection with the death of a child (for which he was certainly not responsible), that I abandoned my biography. The article that ENCOUNTER published was written, and I hope obviously so, *con amore*. And I am quite certain that he would not have accused me of ill manners, or have put up with me for five minutes had he suspected me of such.

As for Mrs David's comment, I would not swear on oath that he wore a hearing aid. I *think* he did, at least at times. I certainly recall his saying that the great advantage of a hearing aid was it gave its owner the ability to switch off when bored. I suspect he might have been bored by any lengthy discussion of whether he felt "swimpy" or "squimpy" in the morning: on some mornings he may well have felt both.

CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON

Dublin

Glass, Darkly

SO JUDICIOUS A CRITIC as Douglas Dunn should not take as unfriendly a suggestion that he look again at the title of my book which he reviewed in ENCOUNTER, December 1974. The selected poems appear under the title "Travelling *Behind* Glass, not "Travelling *Under* Glass", as Mr Dunn supposes. Apart from the difference in image (travelling under glass somehow brings to mind a number of panicking microbes under a chemist's bell glass) the sound of Mr Dunn's title is disturbing. Can it be that more than one poet in this difficult era is deficient in rhythmic sensibility?

ANNE STEVENSON

University of Dundee

I APOLOGISE for my slip with Anne Stevenson's title. That more than one poet is deficient in "rhythmic sensibility" was my point. Poets' criticism, as Eliot said long ago, does tend to reflect the interests of the poets who write it, and what, if anything, they learn from their own poems.

DOUGLAS DUNN

Hull

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AUTHORS

Gillian Tindall's latest novel, *The Traveller and his Child*, will be published later this year by Hodder & Stoughton. . . .

George Feaver is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *From Status to Contract: A Biography of Sir Henry Maine* (Longman, 1969), and editor of Maine's *Popular Government* (Harvester Press, 1972) and Beatrice Webb's *Our Partnership* (Irish University Press, 1973). The illustrations to his article are by **Richard Willson.** . . .

George Watson is Lecturer in English at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St John's College. He is editor of *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*; his latest work is a study of Victorian politics, *The English Ideology* (Allen Lane, 1973). . . .

Max Egremont has worked on the staff of a U.S. Senator and was Washington correspondent of *The Spectator*. . . .

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Bernard Bergonzi, Professor of English at the University of Warwick, is the author, among other books, of *The Situation of the Novel* (1970) and a collection of essays, *The Turn of a Century* (Macmillan, 1973). . . .

Anthony Thwaite's latest book of poems, *New Confessions*, is published by Oxford University Press. . . .

Laurence Lerner is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. His most recent critical study is *The Uses of Nostalgia* (Chatto & Windus, 1972). The Harvester Press have just published his latest volume of poems, *A.R.T.H.U.R.: The Life and Opinions of a Digital Computer*. . . .

Jonathan Raban is the author of *Soft City* (Hamish Hamilton, 1974). . . .

F. H. Keenlyside was a civil servant from 1934–1947. Thereafter he has been General Manager of Union-Castle Mail S.S. Co., and a member of the General Council of the Chamber of Shipping.

Mark Abrams is Director of the Survey Unit, Social Science Research Council, and author of *Social Surveys and Social Actions* (1951). . . .

The two volumes of *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, by Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, are published in Britain by Wildwood House at £4.25 and £5.50 (Little, Brown, Boston, $8·95, $12·95). We regret the omission of a footnote to this effect in **Harry G. Johnson's** review of the book in the January issue. . . .

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